

PRESBYTERY OF SAN DIEGO STATED MEETING –May 15, 2018

The Stated meeting of the Presbytery of San Diego at La Jolla Presbyterian Church, was convened by Ruling Elder Sue Skala, Moderator, at 4:00 p.m. She led the Presbytery in prayer. Rev. Dr. Paul Cunningham, host pastor, welcomed the Presbytery.

The Presbytery gathered for worship and business prior to the dinner break, with Rev. Bob Davis preaching on Ephesians 4, “We Are God’s People: Live Zealously”, followed by a report from Rev. Daniel So on Cyclical San Diego and a presentation on the Gulf Coast mission trip by Rev. Jay Shirley. The offering was dedicated to the San Diego Street Choir.

ROLL: It was VOTED that the roll would be taken by card, and that those registering during the meeting, together with corresponding members, and those requesting leaves of absence (when granted) constitute the roll. A quorum was present.

	<u>CONGREGATION</u>	<u>TEACHING ELDERS</u>	<u>ECCLESIASTICAL DESIGNATION</u>	<u>RULING ELDERS</u>
1-1	Brawley, First	J. Pazan K. Pazan(e)	101 101	Carl Stills
2-1	Carlsbad, Christ Church of La Costa	G. Bostrom E. Moran	101 103	Kim Corthay Garrett Merrill
3-1	Chula Vista, Chula Vista	R. Davis A. McClane	101 103	Joan Stroh
4-2	Coronado, Graham Memorial	D. H. McElrath J. Joseph	101 103	DeEtte Loeffler Ralph West
5-1	El Cajon, First	R. Ziccardi	105	Wanda Feldner
6-1	El Cajon, Fletcher Hills	K. Womack	101	Tom Guest
7-1	Escondido, Westminster	J. McCrory	105	Nancy Scholder
8-5	La Jolla, La Jolla	P. Cunningham M. Sedgwick S. Mitchell	101 103 105	Bernie Porter(a) Bill Abrell Christy Zatkan Jim Sedgwick Deanne Rohde
9-1	La Jolla, Mt. Soledad	J. Moser	101	Cindy Green
10-1	Lakeside, Community	R. W. Mentze	101	Linda Sunkel (q)
11-2	Oceanside, First	M. Killeen E. Wilson-Manahan D. A. Walker	105 103 109	Edward Paradis Peter Gill
12-4	Rancho Santa Fe, Village Community	J. Baca J. K. Farley N. Presa D. R. Caughey	101 103 103 109	Laura Metzger Jane Allison Austin Bob Dauner Michael Dyer

13-1	San Diego, Christ United	N. Byrd G. W. Smith	101 109	Ben Brown
14-1	San Diego, Faith	G. Ziccardi	105	Nancy Harber
15-3	San Diego, First	J. Andrews P. R. Pulliam	101 109	Maurice Caskey(e) Rudy Kosits Don Rugg
16-1	San Diego, Iglesia Emmanuel		107	Amado Olguin
17-2	San Diego, Korean	Y. H. Kang	101	Tony Jae Young Ho Yoo
18-1	San Diego, Linda Vista	R. Roth H. M. Heath, Jr.	108 109	Stephen Awe
19-1	San Diego, Mira Mesa		105	Thalia Rankin
20-1	San Diego, Northminster	J. Shirley N. Landis	105 301	Veronica Doyle
21-1	San Diego, Orange Ave	C. Brewster	107	
22-1	San Diego, Pacific Beach	A. Deuel	101	Steve Ritz
23-2	San Diego, Palisades	D. Hagmaier	101	Ruth Sweet Diana Lorne
24-4	San Diego, Point Loma Community	K. Shaw A. Worth	101 103	Fred Dougherty Em Cummins Art Michalek Barbett Wood(e)
25-6	San Diego, Rancho Bernardo Community	B. Stamper M. Wasef	101 103	Richard Powers Jim Dunny Linda Hittle (e) Mady Cheng
26-1	San Diego, Southeast	R. Sparling(e)	106	Phil Bazier
27-1	San Diego, Taiwanese	Shang Nan Tsai	101	Winnie Davis
28-1	San Diego, Westminster	M. Cochran M. Taxer	105 109	William Hodgkiss
29-5	Solana Beach, Solana Beach	M. McClenahan J. D. Espitia P. Taylor	101 103 103	Steve Carter Barry Billingsley Lola Jordeth Colin Holman Mike Garrett
30-1	Spring Valley, Trinity	J. Wilson	105	Greg Schwartz
31-1	Vista, Grace	M. Wallman E. Barrantes	105 191	Patrick Ryan
32-1	Westmorland, Community	E. Crews	107	Ruth Hoskins

BOLD = Attended Meeting e = excused A = Alternate a = absent

<u>OTHER PRESBYTERY MEMBERS and STAFF</u>		<u>ECCLESIASTICAL DESIGNATION</u>
* Executive Presbyter	*TE Michael Mudgett	302
* Stated Clerk	* TE Bob Davis	303
* Presbytery Vice-Moderator	* RE Sue Skala	
* Chair, Committee on Ministry	* RE Michael Williams	
* Chair, Evangelism and Missions	* RE Lyn Lloyd-Smith	
* Chair, Executive Committee	* RE Jack Shelver	
*Chair, Ecclesiastical Committee	* RE Maurice Caskey(e)	
At-large member Executive Committee	* RE Marcos Mujica	
At-large member Executive Committee	* RE Linda Hittle(e)	
At-large member Executive Committee	* RE Holly Nolan	
Office Manager	Jennifer Sedgwick	
Minute Clerk	Carole Ostrander	
Director, Presbyterian Urban Ministries	Raul Palomino	
Communications/PresbyNews Editor	Bob Battenfield	

* Voting member of Presbytery

CRE:

Sudanese American

Solana Beach

Westmorland

Faith

Vista

Vista

Orange Avenue

Urban Life

Southeast

William Tut *

Paula Taylor *

Elizabeth Crews

Mary Beck

Marcos Mujica

Glenna Spindelman

Chris Brewster*

Sarah Carter

Steve Peters

VISITORS AND GUESTS

Karen Mudgett

Cheryl Kosits, San Diego First

John Fischer, First El Cajon

Nancy Deuel, Pacific Beach

Frederick Bonkovsky, St. Augustine Presbytery

Larry Grounds, Seattle Presbytery

Cathy Love, Rancho La Costa

Noel Muschia, Ebenezer

Betsy Martin, Pacific Beach Presbyterian

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:

Mark Hong – Synod Executive Presbyter

INQUIRERS:**OTHER MINISTERS:**

R. K. Adams	299	G. Horn	797	E. Reynolds	645
H. H. Allen	299	R. Humphries	299	L. Rice	701
R. E. Anderson	299	W. L. James	299	J. Robertson	299
R. C. Betters	299	K. Johnson	761	D. Satre	791
J. H. Boller, Jr.	299	L. S. Johnson	797	T. Simpson	797
J. Breeding	797	T. F. Johnson	299	M. W. Smith	761
P. Bridges	797	J. Kerkhoff	797	D. So	171
W. Bynagte	299	J. Kim	797	J. So	171
J. Chambers	299	C. Kohlbray	171	W. A. Soldwisch	299
C. Cowden	797	T. C. Lai	299	G. Spearman	299
D. R. Davis	299	C. S. Lee	503	G. L. Stewart	299
K. Dawsey-Richardson	797	C. M. Lenocker	299	T. Straeter	797
S. W. DeLong	299	L. S. León	501	T. Theriault	299
A. F. Desterhaft	299	A. Lin	501	T. Thompson	797
A Duell	299	A. Y. Lin	791	R. Trent	299
D. F. Edic	299	F. Lower	797	H. S. Vigeveno	299
I. Farrell	797	P. Lual	299	M. Walls	299
V. Ford	299	J. Messervè	797	M. Watson	171
B. Franco	701	B. Moller	299	P. Weiler	299
R. Garton	299	D. Newhouse	299	M. F. Willard, Jr.	299
E. Girod	299	D. Pierson	797	M. Williams	751
J. Hagelanz	299	E. Piper	797	T. Wolfe	299
C. Hammond	299	J. Rauch	797	R. Yenter	299
R. Hayward	299	B. Reed	299	S. Locke	299
W.W. Hoffmann	299				
C. M. Hong	299				

Attendance:

Teaching Elders	46
Ruling Elders	37
Corresponding	1
Inquirers/Candidates	0
Visitors/Others	13
Total	97

Section 1: Reports

A. Report of the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk reported the following:

1. That the Investigating Committee convened to investigate a complaint against Minister Y has declined to file charges.
2. That a complaint has been received regarding Minister Z and Investigating Committee 2018-1 has been convened.
3. That all official correspondence and communications received since the last meeting have been referred to the appropriate governing body, committee, commission or staff in accordance with the *Manual of Operations, Part I*.

Pastor Bob Davis
Acting Stated Clerk

B. Report of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on April 17, 2018 and VOTED the following:

1. Approved final sale of Pacific Beach Presbyterian Church manse;
2. To concur with the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Parrish Bridges and Mira Mesa Presbyterian Church effective April 1, 2018.
3. To receive the resignation of Parrish Bridges as chair of the Nominating Committee and as a teaching elder commissioner to the 223rd General Assembly effective April 1, 2018;
4. To elect Chris Kohlbry to be Nominating Committee Chair – a position elected by the Executive Committee – to replace Parrish Bridges;
5. Approved election of Rosalind Ziccardi to serve as a teaching elder commissioner to the 223rd General Assembly (2018);
6. To concur with COM recommendation to approve Graham Memorial Presbyterian's request to transition John Joseph from designated associate (time specific) to a permanent "associate pastor" (without any time specification; or, in the language of the Book of Order G-2.0504a "for an indefinite period").
7. To approve the appointment of an Administrative Commission to ordain Drew Hansen:
Pastors: Kevin Womack, Kim Dawsey-Richardson, and Fairlight Lower
Elders: Sue Skala (Pt Loma), Paul Knowles (FHPC), and Mike French (El Cajon)
8. To confirm Mike McClenahan to serve as chair of the Cyclical Steering Committee.

Pastor Liz Wilson Manahan

C. Report of the Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry met on February 27, 2018 and April 24, 2018 and VOTED the following:

1. Pursuant to Manual of Operations, Chapter 8, IV.B.2 to concur with the congregation of Pacific Beach Presbyterian Church to dissolve the pastoral relationship with Alan Deuel effective May 31, 2018; with retirement benefits effective June 1, 2018. All financial obligations to the parties have been met.
2. Pursuant to Manual of Operations, Chapter 8, IV.B.2 to concur with the congregation of Mira Mesa Pres to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Parrish Bridges and Mira Mesa Presbyterian Church effective April 1, 2018. All financial obligations to the parties have been met.
3. Pursuant to Manual of Operations, Chapter 8, IV.B.4, to approve the transfer of membership for Neal Nybo from San Diego Presbytery to Los Ranchos Presbytery, contingent upon their vote to receive him into membership.

D. Report of the Ecclesiastical Committee

The Ecclesiastical Committee reports that it has completed its annual review of session and congregational records. There were 22 churches with no errors, 4 churches with 1 error and 4 churches with 2 errors in session minutes. Minutes from Korean United and Orange Avenue Community churches were not available.

Section 2. Consent Agenda

The Presbytery approved the following recommendations from the Acting Stated Clerk:

1. That the proposed minutes of the Presbytery Stated meeting on February 20, 2018 be approved.
2. That the Administrative Commission created to install the Rev. Megan Cochran as Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Pt. Loma on Saturday, March 3, 2018 – having completed its duties – be dismissed with thanks.
3. That the Presbytery elect Heather Johnson to become a Theological Student Advisory Delegate to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis. She was nominated by San Francisco Theological Seminary to serve.
4. That Administrative Commission created to ordain Drew Hansen on Sunday, April 22, 2018 – having completed its duties – be dismissed with thanks.

Pastor Bob Davis, Acting Stated Clerk

The Presbytery approved the following recommendations from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry:

CPM voted that Hyukwoo Claus Shin has successfully satisfied the requirements listed in G-2.0607. **The presbytery** certified he is ready to receive a call.

The Presbytery voted to concur with the recommendations of COM:

1. Establishing an administrative commission to install Alex Wirth as an associate pastor of Pt. Loma Community Presbyterian Church on May 27, 2018 with the following members:

Rev. Kevin Womack
Rev. Karla Shaw
Peggy Johnston (ruling elder from Westminster)
Rev. Chris Lenocker
John Spafford (ruling elder from PLCPC)
Rev. Megan Cochran
Nancy Harber (ruling elder from Faith)
Rev. Kim Dawsey-Richardson

- 2 **Expanding the commissioning for Steve Peters** to include all powers listed in G-2.1001 (moderate session; administer Sacraments; officiate marriages).

Rev. Mike Sedgwick, Chair

Section 3: Business to be presented and/or VOTED on the floor

- A. Rev. Alan Deuel was recognized for his 12 years at Pacific Beach and his over 30 years in the ministry as he retires from his position as Pastor.
- B. **The Gracious Dismissal Task Force recommended approval of the proposed Gracious Dismissal Policy** (text appended to the bottom of this document). Sue Skala gave a report on the committee revision of the policy and answered questions.

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Gracious Dismissal Policy.

Sue Skala, Chair

- C. **Human Resources withdrew its recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk position:**
Rev. John Moser explained the need for more time to develop the job description and the compensation package.

John Moser, Chair

Section 4: Information Items

The Executive Presbyter's report

Rev. Michael Mudgett, Executive Presbyter, spoke of disseminating his monthly missive to church Elders, summer camp for youth at Zypher Point, and "Golf for Good" – a fund raiser for PUM. He read and discussed the Presbytery Mission Statement and the Vision Statement.

Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis.

The Commissioners to General Assembly gathered for prayer as they were commissioned for the gathering in St. Louis, MO next month.

Presbytery VOTED to adjourn at 7:25 pm and was dismissed with prayer.

The next Presbytery meeting will be Tuesday, September 18th at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Spring Valley.

Carole Ostrander, Minute Clerk
for Rev. Bob Davis, Acting Stated Clerk

Covenants and Gracious Dismissal Presbytery of San Diego

The Faith:

Our God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. Making covenant with us, God became our God and we became the People of God. God places us in covenant with each other. That we covenant with each other is required; what we covenant to be and do is ours to discern.

The congregations of the Presbytery of San Diego have covenanted together to live out the Faith, and to be faithful together in hearing God's call and obeying that call. Our vision is to plant new churches, revitalize existing ones, and align structure to vision.

Into this covenant each congregation has willingly come.

Just as there are clear means by which a congregation enters into the covenant, there are to be clear means by which a congregation may leave the covenant. The termination of this covenant relationship, if done by this Gracious Dismissal process, may involve schism, but is not itself alone an act of schism. It is understood that a congregation which begins the Gracious Dismissal process has attempted reconciliation with the Presbytery.

Nor is a congregation's departure to be done in isolation. We are in covenant. We live and discern together. By shared study of Scripture and our Presbyterian theology and polity, praying together, and sustained common conversation, the Presbytery and its congregations may reexamine their membership in the covenant.

True to the founding of our congregations and the covenants we have made together over the years, and true to the covenant we have made with congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the covenant may be completed only with a dismissal of the congregation by the Presbytery to another reformed body.

Dismissal of the congregation does not imply or require the Presbytery's relinquishment to the dismissed congregation of the subject church's property or of the subject church's assets.

The Practice:

1. Congregations who want to reexamine their membership in the covenant of the Presbytery of San Diego will do the following to discern God's will in these matters:
 - a. The Session of the congregation, through their Moderator and Clerk, will notify in writing the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Diego their desire to reexamine their membership. The Stated Clerk will refer this matter to the Presbytery Executive Committee.
 - b. The Presbytery's Executive Committee shall compose a team of Presbytery representatives. The Session shall compose a team of congregational representatives (see i and ii below). This combined team shall be called the Joint Solution Team.
 - i. Presbytery representatives shall be nominated by the Presbytery's Nominating Committee and trained and commissioned by the Presbytery staff and/or others with specific expertise. This group shall function as a Presbytery Representative Pool elected by and accountable to the Presbytery.
 - ii. The Session shall elect congregational representatives. These representatives shall have a majority of its members not from the current Session. The congregation representatives shall join with the Presbytery representatives to form a Joint Solution Team

to work to generate a joint solution to the request for dismissal. The number of congregational representatives shall be equal to the number of Presbytery representatives.

iii. The initial meeting of the Joint Solution Committee shall serve as an orientation, led by the Executive Presbyter.

c. The Joint Solution Team will meet with the Session within three months of notification. At that meeting, a process and its timing, either broadly or narrowly defined, will be agreed upon. It will include provisions for shared study of scripture, Presbyterian theology and polity, and prayer, sustained committed conversation between the congregation and its Session, and all appropriate and required due diligence as required by the "Trust Clause," our polity thereunder, and the Presbytery. These times together may be in formal meetings of the congregation called for no other purpose and at which no votes will be taken, or in less formal gatherings, again without vote.

d. This prayerful dialogue will be directed to a good faith exchange of ideas and information, seeking a solution consistent with the procedure and the health and mission of the Presbytery and the congregation. The Joint Solution Team shall have at least two meetings with the Session and at least one meeting with the congregation. (2010 PJC, G-3.0301a)

e. At the same time the Executive Committee of the Presbytery along with other Presbytery standing committees shall consider the effectiveness of the present ministry at the given location and/or the potential of other Presbytery ministries benefitting from the real property location and or the selling of the real property. The Executive Committee of the Presbytery shall obtain from the Session a professional appraisal done by a certified commercial appraiser.

f. If there is a will to proceed, the Session may call a meeting of the congregation to request the Presbytery to dismiss them to another Reformed body. This meeting may not take place less than six months after the first meeting of the Session and the Joint Solution Team. The date, time, and place will be mutually agreed upon by the Session and the Presbytery. No less than a week prior to the congregation meeting, the Joint Solution Team shall host an informational meeting for the congregation, wherein the Team shall describe the purpose and history of their efforts, the content of their discussions (keeping such confidences of the Team as is appropriate), their eventual conclusions (and their dissents therefrom), and any other matters germane to their efforts. The Team shall provide copies (or summaries) of written materials on which they relied or consulted. Attendees shall be permitted to ask questions (and questions may be submitted by any member of the congregation who is not in attendance). All people present shall strive for candor, transparency, and graciousness in their discussions. No vote will be taken; however, if based on the communications received from those present, the Team may reconvene and discuss alterations to their proposed solution. There will be no votes at any subsequent informational meetings. At the ensuing congregation meeting, there will be one meeting at one location. No other unrelated business may be considered and there must be a vote on the request. If called, at least 30 days' notice will be mailed to all the active members of the congregation in advance of the meeting and shall include the nature and purpose of that meeting. At least 50% of the average weekly attending congregation over the past year must be present. The question to be put before the congregation shall be the question of dismissal as presented by the Joint Solution Team and as

amended during the meeting. Matters related to timing of dismissal, and terms regarding disposition of property, both real and personal, and financial matters will be part of this vote. Ample time will be provided for those on both sides of the question to speak. The Joint Solution Team will have the privilege of the floor. Following discussion and prayer, a written ballot will be taken on the motion. The voting options will be Request Dismissal, Do Not Request Dismissal, or Abstain. If three-quarters (¾) of the active members present and voting favor dismissal, the request shall go to the Presbytery.

g. The meeting of Presbytery, which will consider this request, must meet within three months of the congregational meeting requesting it to do so, or its next regularly-scheduled meeting, whichever is later.

No less than a week prior to the Presbytery meeting, the Joint Solution Team shall host an informational meeting for the Presbytery, wherein the Team shall describe the purpose and history of their efforts, the content of their discussions (keeping such confidences of the Team as is appropriate), their eventual conclusions (and their dissents therefrom), and any other matters germane to their efforts. The Team shall provide copies (or summaries) of written materials on which they relied or consulted. Attendees shall be permitted to ask questions (and questions may be submitted by any member of the congregation who is not in attendance). All people present shall strive for candor, transparency, and graciousness in their discussions. No vote will be taken; however, if based on the communications received from those present, the Team may reconvene and discuss alterations to their proposed solution. There will be no votes at any subsequent informational meetings.

At the subsequent Presbytery meeting, which may be either a stated or called meeting, the Presbytery will:

- hear from members of the congregation requesting dismissal;
- hear from members of the congregation opposing dismissal;
- hear from the Joint Solution Team;
- be informed of any financial contributions or obligations related to this congregation through its relationship with any governing body of the PC(USA);
- hear whether the denomination to which this church wishes to be dismissed is a Reformed body;
- be informed of how this congregation's dismissal would affect the mission and ministry of the congregation and of the Presbytery;
- hear from anyone not described above who wishes or is asked to address the Presbytery,
- provided such testimony is not duplicative of testimony previously given.

Among the questions the Presbytery will consider is, failing to affect reconciliation, whether one of the factions is the true church (as that term is understood in our Book of Order and Book of Confessions). This determination is to be on the basis of the marks of the true church as named in our constitution: the true preaching of the Word of God, the right administration of the sacraments of Jesus Christ, and ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered (3.18, 5.134-5). Property or its value will not be awarded to any church that is not true.

After discussion and prayer, the Presbytery, exercising its responsibility to discern shall deliberate and vote on the question of dismissal as presented by the Joint Solution Team and

as amended during the meeting. Matters related to timing of dismissal, and property and financial matters will be part of this vote. These matters are to be fully negotiated and known in the call to the meeting of the presbytery. The votes cast must be “yes,” “no,” or “abstain.”

- h. If dismissal is granted by the Presbytery, full consideration of the disposition of the property(s) shall have been made with careful recognition of the provision in G-4.0201 – “the property...is a tool for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world” -and of the provision of G-4.0203 – “all property...is held in trust ...for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”. The full commercial appraised value of the property or properties is to be known, as well as the value of the church’s other assets, such as, but not limited to bank accounts, memorials, designated accounts, equipment, furnishings, real property, vehicles, revenue sources, etc. The presbytery may dismiss the congregation with or without the property(s) and, if with, then with full consideration of its commercial appraised value.

The value attributed to the property and assets of the subject church will not be limited to the monetary value. Considerations shall be given to the value of the continuing presence and ministry of the dismissed congregation with that property; the value of a new or existing congregation newly planted by the Presbytery within that property; the value of other continuing and new ministries of the Presbytery with the realized monetary value from the sale or lease of the property; and the other missional interests of the Presbytery.

At the meeting of the Presbytery amendments to the recommended motion(s) are to be permitted, following proper rules for amending motions.

2. If the Joint Solution Team cannot reach agreement, a new Joint Solution Team will be assigned. No members of the prior Joint Solution Team shall serve again on the new Joint Solution Team. If the decision of the Presbytery is to reject the proposed joint solution, the Joint Solution Team will attempt to resolve the impasse. If a solution is approved by Presbytery, but the Session and congregation do not accept that action, they shall be deemed to have rejected the offer to be dismissed and the Joint Solution Team will enter into conversations with the Session to help the congregation move forward in its ministry as a member of the Presbytery of San Diego. The expectation is that a congregation will normally not seek dismissal again for at least three years.

3. A congregation or its leadership which does not sincerely invite its covenant partner, the Presbytery, into its process of considering a request for dismissal, will have by that inaction, invited the Presbytery to initiate other parts of the covenant, including but not limited to the formation of an administration commission with all the powers that the Presbytery may grant.

Our Gracious Dismissal Policy is evolving as questions of PC(USA) polity, including our Book of Order, are addressed by adopted Synod and/or GA policies, and by judicial decisions, such as Sundquist et al. v. Heartland Presbytery, Toms et al. v. Presbytery of San Francisco, Magee et al. v. The Presbytery of New York City, and Locke, et al. v. Presbytery of San Diego. Other guidance is likely to be handed down. Our intent is to comply fully, both in substance and procedure, with all applicable requirements. Congregants and clergy within our Presbytery, as well as the Joint Solution Team, are directed to those source materials.



Fossil fuels, Middle East, denomination structures and funding likely to dominate General Assembly

*by Jerry Van Marter | Office of the General Assembly
Communications*

LOUISVILLE — While trying to predict what shape any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly will take, several issues are shaping up to take center stage June 16-23 when the 223rd General Assembly convenes in St. Louis.

The first order of business for the 538 commissioners and about 200 advisory delegates will be to elect their moderator. Then the 13 Assembly Committees will work their way through the items of business this Assembly will consider.

That business will include a mix of social and theological issues and the internal workings of the PC(USA).

The 10 issues most apt to capture major attention at the Assembly:

1. **Election of the Moderator:** Three slates — two co-moderator teams and one moderator/vice-moderator pair — have formally announced their intention to stand for moderator. They are Chantal D. Atnip, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Carlisle standing for moderator with her vice-moderator running mate the Rev. Ken Hockenberry of Chicago Presbytery; the Rev. Eliana Maxim of Seattle Presbytery and the Rev. Bertram Johnson of New York City Presbytery as co-moderators; and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann of the Presbytery of Boston and Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri of the Presbytery of Tropical Florida as co-moderators. The election is Saturday evening, June 16.
2. **Fossil Fuel Divestment:** For the third Assembly in a row, an overture — OVT 006 from Hudson River Presbytery — has been submitted asking PC(USA) investing agencies (primarily the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation) to divest of stock in fossil fuel companies. To date, more than 30 presbyteries have concurred with the overture. Other overtures from New Covenant Presbytery (OVT 14 and OVT 59), Newton Presbytery (OVT 40), Monmouth Presbytery (OVT 47 and OVT 48) and Twin Cities Area Presbytery (OVT 57) address various aspects of climate change and environmental justice.
3. **Israel-Palestine/Middle East:** With positions hardening in the region, at least three overtures ask for continued work on Middle East peace, particularly in Israel-Palestine. Overtures to date are from the Synod of the Covenant (OVT 020 and OVT 21), Grace Presbytery (OVT 025), San Francisco Presbytery (OVT 029 and OVT 030), Philadelphia Presbytery (OVT 42) and Redwoods Presbytery (OVT 46). An overture from Cascades Presbytery (OVT 010) calls for the PC(USA) to respond to the crisis in Syria focused on four principles: stop the killing; work for reconciliation; alleviate the suffering; and deepen PC(USA) partnerships with Syrian Christians.
4. **Per Capita:** With economic stresses affecting the PC(USA) at all levels and amidst a rapidly

changing ministry context everywhere, a 2019 per capita increase of \$2.98 per member to \$10.71 (a 39 percent increase over 2018) and \$.74 in 2020 to \$11.45 is being sought by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly in order to rebuild and reinforce the work of mid councils with their congregations denomination-wide. An overture from Newton Presbytery (OVT 018) seeks a study of the system of per capita funding in the PC(USA).

5. **The Way Forward:** Without bishops or other centralized authority figures, the question of who speaks to and for Presbyterians in the church and the world is an issue that has received extensive attention by the Way Forward Commission, a group appointed by the 222nd General Assembly to find better ways for the PC(USA) to operate in the 21st century. The Commission's recommendations strengthen the office of General Assembly Stated Clerk, making that person the formal "head of communion," clarify the Stated Clerk's role as the primary spokesperson to and for the church, and strengthen the Stated Clerk's overall management role in the ministry of all the church's national agencies. The reports of the Way Forward Commission and the Assembly's All-Agency Review Committee propose a number of ways the work of the denomination's national agencies — particularly the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency — can be made more efficient, more effective, and more collaborative. The most contentious recommendations are around the structure and responsibilities of the denomination's Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) A Corporation.
6. **Racism/Poverty/Violence:** Against the backdrop of a history of conflict in St. Louis around racism, violence and poverty dating back well before the police shooting of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson in 2014, the Assembly will address a number of issues around those questions. A report from local and denominational leaders entitled "The Gospel from St. Louis" will come to the Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Through the "Hands and Feet" initiative launched by General Assembly Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, Assembly-goers will have a number of opportunities to learn, engage in direct community service, and participate in public witness events around the issues of racism, poverty and violence.
7. **Immigration:** Though at this date no formal business has been submitted, with the continuing threats of deportation and detention of immigrants, many of them Presbyterians from such countries as Indonesia, the issue of immigration is sure to be addressed at the Assembly. The Assembly is also apt to address the plight of some 800,000 immigrants whose status is uncertain due to the federal government's failure to address the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act.
8. **Gun Violence:** New Castle Presbytery has submitted OVT 51, which addresses the epidemic of gun violence in this country, affirms previous General Assembly policies designed to reduce gun violence and urges all Presbyterians to pray for an end to gun violence and to take steps to reduce gun violence in the U.S.
9. **Paid Family Leave:** The Presbytery of Boston has submitted a package of three overtures (OVT 032, OVT 033 and OVT 034) that instructs the Board of Pensions to include 12 weeks

of paid parental leave as part of its benefits package, including financial assistance to help congregations pay for a supply pastor during the leave; calls for family leave of 12 weeks to be included in all terms of call; and to include paid family leave of at least 12 weeks as part of the responsibilities of presbyteries. A similar overture has been submitted by Twin Cities Area Presbytery (OVT 56).

10. **Pastoral Leadership for Immigrant Congregations:** As the number of immigrant fellowships grows in the PC(USA), the question of finding adequate leadership for these nascent congregations is more frequently asked. An overture from de Cristo Presbytery (OVT 017) seeks more flexible ways to ordain immigrant congregational leaders as ruling elders in order to provide more and better leadership for the whole church.