

GATHERING OF THE
CHURCHES OF BEAVER-
BUTLER PRESBYTERY

**SUPPLEMENTAL
INFORMATION
DAY OF MEETING**

Tuesday, July 30, 2024
Beginning at 6:00 PM

In-Person at:
Clinton Presbyterian Church
197 Glade Mill Road, Saxonburg, PA 16056
Rev. Kelley Angleberger, Pastor
5:30 pm Registration

Additional Items for Information from the Ministry & Vocation Committee

- **Ordination Exam Readers:** Lynn Byers and Rev. Jason Sinagra
- **Covenant Pastor Contract:** between Rev. Mark Davis and West Sunbury Presbyterian Church.
- **Retirement Approved:** Rev. Robert Goossen effective July 1, 2024. Bob will move to part-time at Ohio UPC on July 1, 2024, with the official final date on July 15, 2024.
- **Approved:** Candidate Kerry Dowdy as Certified to Receive a Call on the endorsement of the Preparation for Ministry Team. Candidate Dowdy has met all the ordination process criteria to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

Beaver-Butler Presbytery
226th General Assembly (2024) “Live into Hope” – Salt Lake City
Kerry Michelle Dowdy – Ruling Elder Commissioner

Training:

The Synod of the Trinity offered training on April 6th, 2024, in Williamsport, PA. Several Commissioners and Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs) gathered in the Genetti Hotel conference room. We discussed some of the electronic elements of the 226th General Assembly by logging into PC-biz.org where we could view the overtures. We were given strategies to review our committee actions first and then look around at other committees. Those that had been to GA before offered us some tips: 1) to listen to advisory and resource people, 2) to utilize small groups, 3) be respectful of culture, opinions, use grace and listen, 4) committee roles of staff person and parliamentarian are not able to comment unless asked, and 5) be aware of costs. They gave us a brief layout of the plenary where there will be sets of tables and chairs with assigned seating by Presbytery. All our voting and business was conducted electronically on the MyGA platform. There were also mandatory online trainings on MyGA that taught us how to use submit amendments, seek recognition to ask questions, voting, and other parliamentarian procedures. We were also trained on Equity Primes which we used to pause and reflect on the discussion to make sure all voices are heard, determine if a people group is missing from the table, and to check our own emotions.

Committee:

I was assigned to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships (ECU) Committee. All the committee work was done online via Zoom and the MyGA platform. We met on April 26th, 2024, where we spent time getting to know one another. We also spent some time learning the platform we will be using for all the committee (and plenary) business from the site: myga.pc-biz.org. Once we were logged on, we could view the overtures, schedules, and other important information. We met again on June 8th, 2024, to draft a covenant which outlined our commitment to one another and how we will conduct our business. We had listed that we would be kind, respectfully listen, remember grace, honor each other, agree to disagree, invite the Holy Spirit to the discussion, show up prepared, and a several other points.

The ECU Committee had 7 items of business. Most of our overtures were not overly complex, but we did have two that incurred much discussion. We completed our work from June 25 to June 27, 2024. All of our items were focused on PC(USA)’s involvement with other faith traditions that we partner with.

- ECU-01: EADs to 227th General Assembly (2026). The purpose of this overture was to select the denominations/churches that will be invited to the next GA. An EAD is an Ecumenical Advisory Delegate, who has voice but does not vote, however they are polled for their advisory expertise during Assembly. Per Sabrina Slater, the corresponding member of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR), she told us that the role and purpose of an EAD is to “remind us of the church at large and bring a different perspective.” The actual conflict concerning the invitation was with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and their stance on female pastors/leaders, abortion, LGBTQIA+, and other discriminatory positions. An amendment was made to allow them but limit or remove their voice as recommended by the Advocacy Committee for

Women and Gender Justice (ACWGJ) and LGBTQIA+ Equality Committee (ACQ+E). After much discussion and emotion on this topic, the amendment failed. We then returned to the original motion which passed. If we are to be an open and welcoming denomination – the General Assembly should reflect those values, and this is why we passed the overture to include the Catholic Bishops with voice to the 227th General Assembly.

- ECU-07: Response to Recommendation Directing GACEIR to Distribute the “Statement Denouncing Antisemitism and Islamophobia” document. This overture had a substitute motion and several amendments to address wording to make it clearer the purpose of this report. We had an open hearing where we heard speaker, John Wimberly who spoke against. We had a resource person, Whitney Wilkenson Arreche, from GACEIR explain this report is a multi-year process and a study document designed to nurture and guide the church and inspire communication. After a call the question, which means we voted to stop the discussion process and proceed to vote. We voted on three amendments that changed words and phrases to the substitute motion which all passed. After much confusion with many amendments and amendments to amendments, the substitute overture with the amendments was passed.

Plenary:

The Plenaries were held in person at Salt Lake City, Utah’s the Salt Palace. It’s a lovely complex and the little bit of time we had to explore revealed a beautiful city. We did have several group meals which included presentations. Beaver-Butler Presbytery folks there gathered for dinner at The Blue Iguana on Tuesday night. There were three hotels near the Salt Palace, and I was in the Hilton, which had a restaurant and breakfast buffet. I met two other commissioners, Dolores and Kay, and we would eat breakfast together. We used this time to discuss the prior days overtures and votes. The 226th General Assembly room was huge with many rows of tables and chairs just as the Synod of the Trinity’s training described. There were wonderful volunteers from Utah Presbytery who assisted us with finding our assigned seats to just about any other question or issue we might have. As far as business was concerned, there were several overtures pulled from the consent agenda for discussion. However, most of the overtures were part of the consent agenda that was voted favorably to approve.

Some highlights of our discernment and voting during the 226th GA:

- There were two sets of co-moderators for consideration. Both provided detailed answers to several questions prior to voting. I found exceptional qualities in all the candidates making choosing one pair over the other quite difficult. It was voted that Rev. CeCe Armstrong and Rev. Tony Larson be the 226th GA co-moderators. While Rev. CeCe showed a fun side, especially her dancing moves, Rev. Tony showed a compassionate side reminding us to not clap and celebrate after the tallied votes, so we do not diminish the commissioners who voted against or opposed.
- Rev. Jihyun Oh was voted as stated clerk with her term beginning August 1, 2024, which makes her the first woman and woman of color to be voted into this position.
- Polity: POL-01 commonly known as the “Olympia Overture” was divided into two sections. Part One’s intent was to add protected classes of “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” to F-1.0403 which passed with little discussion and debate. However, Part Two garnered much discussion both for and against the change to G-2.0104b to remove the words ‘and

nondiscrimination' in the list of questions asked of persons seeking ordination. There were several amendments and much emotion around this matter. Rev. Tony paused the proceedings to lead us in prayer. The motion was passed. These will go before the Presbytery's for approval/ratification.

- Environmental and Climate Justice: ENV-02 and ENV-06. Both called for divestment of fossil fuels investments from PC(USA)'s various funds. The difference between the two overtures was that ENV-02 called for immediate divestment where ENV-06 called for the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to not only study and list the top 10 fossil fuel companies but to advise and advocate for minorities. ENV-02 was presented first and passed after several for and against comments. We had taken a break and when we came back to plenary, it was made clear that ENV-02 and ENV-06 were in direct conflict with each other. This meant that by passing ENV-02, this would result in the failing of ENV-06. So, ENV-06 was postponed and ENV-02 was reconsidered and placed back on the floor. There were comments from minority people groups that this hard stop in investing in fossil fuel companies would impact their livelihood and communities. There were many comments favoring this immediate discontinuation in investments as our duty to be good stewards of the Earth God created. The vote resulted in a failed ENV-02 which gave time and space to discuss and vote on ENV-06 which passed. We choose to be thoughtful and plan our strategy.
- General Assembly Entity Coordination: GAEC-24 was about recognizing the National Caucus of Korean Churches as a caucus of PC(USA). There were many emotions around this one. Korean culture is one of a patriarchy structure. We heard from a Korean woman about her experiences and a gentleman that offered examples. There were several people that spoke in favor as well. It would be impossible to describe the tension and the emotion that filled the room. As this was being discussed at length and several call the question-a Young Adult Advisory Delegate, Milo Browne, stood up and said something like: 'I have not observed any women speaking for this and therefore we should listen to the women this caucus will impact'. The motion before us was to disapprove which was voted in favor.
- Financial Resources: FIN-12 to remove the Pentecost offering beginning in 2026. This was presented to help alleviate financial stress of church congregations from the frequent special offering requests. The new offerings for 2026 and beyond would be the Christmas Joy Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, and World Communion Offering. The first vote resulted in almost a tie with only one vote more in favor which passed the motion. It was voted to reconsider FIN-12 due to this tight margin-I took this to mean it was too close to really tell. There were also IT issues happening around the same time where some folks were having difficulties with MyGA. After reconsideration of the new offering schedule passed. We also voted on FIN-13 which passed the unified 2025-2026 budgets from the Office of General Assembly, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group (A Corp) combined. The budget report included many financial items as well as informational text. FIN-14 set the General Assembly per capital rates for 2025-2026 at \$10.84 and \$11.26 respectfully. The financial overtures were quite interesting to me as an accounting in my day job. The presentation slides and 2025-2026 budget report were easy to follow and understand.
- Ordination: ORD-01, ORD-02, ORD-03. These were overtures concerning 'shared ministry' which allows pastors to work multiple part-time pastorates and be considered full-time

with the churches 'sharing' the cost of the pastor. All of these passed. ORD-08 focused on the ordination exam process as several concerns were brought to the committee's attention due to the concern and trauma from the selection of the Judges text. This was approved to be extended until the next General Assembly to allow for the task force to continue to work. ORD-05, while on the consent agenda, is worth noting that it changed the language of G-2.0610 for ordination candidates who completed the senior ordination exams via alternative means that the reason for the alternative is confidential. It will not be recorded in the Presbytery's meeting minutes nor revealed to transferring Presbytery disclosing the condition/medical reasoning was. I believe this allows greater trust and compassion between the Presbytery and the candidate under care.

- Domestic Engagement: DOE-03 called for action so that children may live free from gun violence. This was passed unanimously! There was no opposition to gun safety and protecting our children.
- General Assembly Procedures: GAP-03 which outlined the standing rules and in one section defined the advisory roles: young adult, theological student, and partner advisory delegates. The partner advisory delegates are defined as ecumenical and mission partners. This is one that I did not fully understand. Does this mean that the MADs are no longer invited to GA? During the polling of delegates, the MADs did not cast an opinion one way or the other. Recently at New Wilmington Mission Conference I was able to speak with Rev. Mark Adams who is a mission co-worker in Mexico. He explained that removing the MAD (mission advisory delegates) meant that they still can attend GA in the role of resource person or observer. They are paid staff of the PC(USA) and paid staff are not given voice or vote at Assembly meetings. Lastly, I would like to mention GAP-01 where we discussed returning to a full in-person General Assembly. Many people were for this but we determined it is cost prohibitive to do so. it was voted to remain the same format of on-line committee work and in-person plenary. We also voted to on the recommendation to hold the 227th General Assembly in Milwaukee for 2026 from June 23 to July 2, 2026. Start making your plans!

There are other overtures that we discussed and voted on the floor of the 226th General Assembly as well as many overtures that were approved through the consent agenda. Some of those will be presented at Presbytery for consideration and ratification. It was an honor and privilege to be part of the 226th General Assembly. No doubt, I felt the pressure and responsibility of listening, discerning, and voting. The Holy Spirit was with us, called upon, prayed upon, and delivered us especially in times of deep emotional pain and trauma that some overtures triggered. There were also the fun times of dancing and humor, the tension breakers where we found mini-Jesus all over the assembly hall, and the just plain silliness. But at the end of the 226th General Assembly, not only were we tired, but I feel that everyone had done a job well-done. May we all "Live into Hope" as we move forward from GA, reviewing and implementing the decisions that were made.