



The Synod of the Covenant Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

8/28/20 Synod Assembly Highlights

On 8/28/20 the General Assembly Administrative Commission (GAAC) welcomed fifteen corresponding members and guests from throughout the Synod to its August Assembly.

Here are some of the highlights:

- GAAC Members, Rev. Brady Radford and Ruling Elder Michelle Johnson led the assembly in opening worship, with a focus on our reliance on God's wisdom.
- The order of the day was a report on the Information Gathering project by Rev. Jay Wittmeyer, Executive Director of the Lombard-Mennonite Peace Center. The project included interviews with a group of eleven individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences. In summary, the project found that "the challenges facing the Synod of the Covenant moving forward are challenges typical of a denomination and that the unresolved hurts from the past will not greatly impact the decision-making and strategic planning of the future. LMPC does not believe that there is a level of reactivity in the Synod that would 'sabotage' future efforts." [Read the full report here.](#)
- The Assembly also discussed at length the best way to accomplish two other goals, both of which require further conversation:
 - Re-engage, learn from, and support communities of color throughout the Synod. The current by-laws point to five caucuses (Asian-American, Black, Hispanic-Latino, Middle-Eastern, Native American) and include their chairs as members of the Assembly, but not all of these groups are currently functioning or include individuals known to the Synod.
 - Return jurisdiction to the Synod from the GAAC. The conversation focused around the wisdom of sequencing of various aspects of the Synod, rather than turning over all aspects of the Synod all at once.
- The Assembly recognized and congratulated Larry Hollar, Stated Clerk of Miami Valley Presbytery, on his upcoming retirement and terrific ministry within the Synod and presbytery.
- As of 8/24/20, 18 higher education scholarship, 1 COVID emergency grant for higher education, and 1 Racial-Ethnic Grant applications have been received. Scholarships applications will be reviewed beginning 8/31/20 and grant applications will be reviewed beginning 10/1/20.



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- The Personnel Committee announced that interviews for a Stated Clerk had been held on 8/27/20 and that they were hopeful that a new Clerk could be elected at the 9/25/20 Assembly. Applications are still being received for the half-time Office Manager position.
- The Stated Clerk reported the reception of the OGA Synod Minutes Review, which included suggestions for improvements but no exceptions, and the conducting of the 2020 presbytery minutes review.
- The participants were encouraged to explore the Synod's relaunched website, synodofthecovenant.org, and to send suggestions to the Interim Executive at synod.covenant@gmail.com.
- The Assembly granted Leslie DeMarco of auditing firm DeMarco and Associates power of attorney to work with the IRS so that the firm can continue its work to update the 2019 and 2020 books.
- The Assembly approved a motion to set up a new bank account at Chase Bank, near the new office at the Kirk in the Hills, 1340 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302. The lease and shared use agreement with the Kirk was approved by the Assembly, with rent set at \$1000/month and a commitment that all of the rent payments will support one of the church's mission partners. This agreement will save the Synod more than \$30,000 annually compared to its current lease in Maumee, OH.
- The next Synod assemblies will be Friday, 9/25/20, beginning at 1:00 pm eastern, and Saturday, 10/31/20, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm eastern. Both will be held on zoom and the latter will invite commissioners from all of the presbyteries.

For more information, you can find all meeting documents at <https://synodofthecovenant.org/assembly-papers/>. Please contact Interim Executive Chip Hardwick with any questions or for more detail: synod.covenant@gmail.com or 309-530-4578.