



The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Synod Assembly Meeting Highlights

May 7, 2021 Administrative Commission Meeting

Just as this spring is proving up in wonderful and delightful ways, we in the Synod of the Covenant (SOC) are showing delight for our growth and determination as we emerge from our restructuring and recentering position. We convened another Synod Assembly Meeting with the Administrative Commission (AC) members and 13 other participants. Among those present included first time SOC assembly attendee Bob Patterson, the new treasurer from Scioto Valley Presbytery. We were also joined by special guests auditors Leslie DeMarco and Jen Malohn from DeMarco & Associates.

The opening and closing prayers given by AC Chair Patrice Hatley were parts of “A Benediction by Bessey” from *A Rhythm of Prayer* edited by Sarah Bessey. We were given even richer spiritual food with the Midday Meditation from Adel Malek. The scriptures came from Romans 12:1-2 and Jeremiah 18:1-6, encouraging us to remember God the potter of our humble clay.

As the AC considers what milestones will signal the timing to restore original jurisdiction, each meeting provides insights and education on those necessary functions for the Synod. One of the most important of these is strengthening SOC’s capacity to learn from and support churches, ministries, and leaders from our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Interim Executive Chip Hardwick gave an update which includes the planned hiring of a lead community organizer to develop a racially-diverse team focusing on each racial-ethnic background. Another very important part of the information gathering is the emphasis on a *listening campaign* meaning a series of one-on-one virtual meetings. These steps are geared to advocate and validate the self-interests of BIPOC constituents.

Attendees also heard about SOC’s ministries currently underway, including Higher Education Scholarships for Christian Leaders, financial support for college ministries, upcoming events to train and support preachers, and leadership development workshops.



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Finances were another significant focal point for this meeting, highlighting past missteps and showing our current position. DeMarco and Associates presented an Agreed-Upon Procedures Report concerning cash disbursements in 2019, which showed a number of cases demonstrating a lack of attention to detail and policies. The AC also approved a revised plan from DeMarco to finalize 2020 finances and to insure excellent separation of duties and internal controls from the Synod staff and volunteers.

Chip Hardwick presented a Financial Clarity report, which highlighted the closing of the Huntington Bank Accounts and a 2021 budget more conservative than the Synod's investment policy permits. Former Treasurer David Bartley was thanked for his consistent support since his service to the Synod concluded in February, 2020. The 2021-to-date Income Statement was presented, showing a positive variance to budget of \$112,000 due mostly to timing issues with per capita support from presbyteries and scholarship and grants payments.

Patrice Hatley presented a communication from the Administrative Commission which gives thanks for the progress made in the Synod and outlines in broad strokes what still needs to happen before the Administrative Commission return jurisdiction to the Synod. She and the AC encourage commissioners and others throughout the Synod to stay in touch with each other and the staff, to pay attention to SOC finances, and to continue to work for reconciliation and spiritual health.

The AC conducted several other administrative matters. You can find all of the meeting papers giving more background on everything in the meeting at [Assembly Information - Synod of the Covenant](#). Feel free to contact Interim Executive Chip Hardwick at 309-530-4578 or chip@synodofthecovenant.org or Stated Clerk Sharon Moore at 313-432-8829 or sharon@synodofthecovenant.org for other information or questions.