



The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

To: The Administrative Commission of the Synod of the Covenant

From: Rev. Charles B. Hardwick, Ph.D., Interim Executive

Date: 8/27/21

Re: Progress toward Goals for Returning Jurisdiction

This is an update on the Synod's progress toward the goals identified by Patrice Hatley in our 6/7/21 conversation: (1) communications, (2) finances, (3) constituent engagement, and (4) support for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) ministries and leadership.

1. Communications

Communications is one of the areas in which the most progress has been made. Some social and mass media statistics follow (with thanks to our consultant Digital 55):

- Our monthly newsletter goes to almost 850 recipients, and its “click to open” rate is 24.4% compared to a 14.1% average for all industries.
- Our Facebook page has 391 followers, with 15-20 posts per month.
- Our YouTube page has 79 subscribers and features 60 videos (the most popular of which has been viewed 2,035 times).

In addition, the staff seeks regular communication with our constituents.

- I have standing monthly zooms with the Executive/General Presbyters (EP/GPs) and some Stated Clerks (SCs).
- I have made presentations at 90%+ of the presbytery meetings since I began.
- The staff seeks to answer all phone calls within by the next business day and all emails within two business days.
- I send out periodic updates to the Synod commissioners between meetings.

2. Financials

The Synod has made important strides in getting clarity around our financial situation, but challenges remain. As a reminder, when the Administrative Commission (AC) took original jurisdiction and soon after, the finances were problematic:



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- Constituents did not have access to financial results, which typically ran several months behind.
- Newly hired staff did not have access to the primary bank account (Huntington).
- Newly hired staff were not paid for more than three months due to problems with the payroll processor.

Progress made to date

- Financial results are posted every month on the Synod's website. As of 7/21, the Synod is \$135k ahead of budget¹.
- Bank accounts have been consolidated into Chase Bank.
- Payroll services are provided excellently by Lake Huron Presbytery.

Remaining Challenges

- 2020 books have still not been closed. Goal: by 10/8/21 annual meeting.
- Balance sheet information is not yet correct. Goal: by 10/8/21 annual meeting.
- Internal Controls training by auditors DeMarco and Associates will be held 9/29/21.

For more detail, see Financial Clarity Reports presented at each AC meeting.

3. Constituent Engagement

The Synod's primary constituents are presbytery staff leaders and Synod commissioners-in-waiting. Both groups show significant engagement with the Synod staff.

Work with EP/GPs and SCs

- The EP/GPs and I meet together monthly for a zoom, with 75% attendance typical.
- As of 8/19/21, all 12 EP/GPs and 7 of the 11 SCs are registered to come to the 8/24-26 gathering in Tiffin, OH.
- EP/GPs and SCs regularly contact me for advice, support, or feedback.

¹ Due to good stewardship, timing, and some outstanding 2020 reconciling entries to be made.



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Work with Synod Commissioners-in-Waiting

- I had a one-on-one zoom with each commissioner in the first quarter of 2021.
- Attendance at the two 2021 Commissioners' Meetings has been more than 80%.
- At AC meetings where commissioners are welcome but attendance is not expected, 7-10 commissioners have been present on average.
- At 8/27/21 AC meeting, presbyteries will be asked to change commissioner terms to be staggered.

4. Support for BIPOC Ministries and Leaders

The Synod has offered the following support with respect to diversity, inclusion, and equity:

- The Self-Development of People team has been reestablished and looks to support BIPOC ministries in 2021 and beyond.
- A LeaderWise workshop on Racial Justice, including the Intercultural Development Inventory and an hour-long debrief, was attended by 40 leaders.
- The inaugural monthly preaching workshop was “Preaching about Racial Justice without Losing your Conviction or your Call” was attended by 50 and the YouTube has been viewed an additional 127 times.

The ongoing important project in this area is the hiring of a Community Organizer to facilitate the self-determination of the various minoritized racial ethnic groups for future ministry. The formation of the steering committee has been slowed by a lack of identified and interested leaders from the Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and Middle Eastern communities. A steering committee with two Black and two Asian-American (Korean) leaders will work to hire the community organizer in September.

Please see the document “Status Report on BIPOC Ministry” from the 5/7/21 AC meeting for more detail about these activities.