



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

## **Synod Assembly**

**Spring Assembly | February 24th & 25th**

**Presbyterian Mission Center**

**Irving, TX**

# Synod of the Sun

2025 Spring Assembly | February 24th & 25th

Presbyterian Mission Center, Irving TX



## Proposed Agenda - Monday, February 24

**Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer** Synod Moderator, Sharon Curry

**Acknowledgement of Land & People** TBD

**Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum** Sharon Curry

**Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors** Sharon Curry

**Adoption of Agenda** Sharon Curry

**Approval of Fall Stated Assembly Minutes** Sharon Curry

**Commissioner Orientation**

**Break**

**Committee Meetings**

**Big Faith Resources**

**Covenant Partnerships and Renewals** NOROC

PCHAS

Pan American School

**Dinner**

**Evening Worship** Bill Wiles, Preaching

# Synod of the Sun

2025 Spring Assembly | February 24th & 25th

Presbyterian Mission Center, Irving TX



## Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, February 25th

### Morning Prayers

### Committees Meet

#### Approval of 2025 Budget

Bill Wiles, Synod Treasurer

#### REPORT: Stated Clerk

Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller

#### REPORT: SPDR

Kathy Lee-Cornell, Director, Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery

#### REPORT: CSP

Thomas Riggs, Communication and Administration Coordinator

#### REPORT: Committee on Representation

#### REPORT: Empowering Committee

Carlos Baladez, Committee Moderator

#### REPORT: Connecting Committee

Polly Williams, Committee Moderator

#### REPORT: Grants & Scholarship Committee

Polly Williams, Commission Moderator

#### REPORT: Coordinating Team

Ben Davidson, CT Moderator

### Sharing at Tables

#### Closing Worship

Synod Vice Moderator Ronald Fike

#### Closing the Assembly

Synod Moderator, Sharon Curry



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

**Fall Stated Meeting Minutes for  
Approval**

Synod Stated Meeting  
Metairie Ridge Presbyterian Church | New Orleans, LA  
November 5-6, 2024

**Welcome & Introductions** –Synod Moderator Ben Davidson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. CT, opening the meeting with prayer.

**Acknowledgement of Land & People** – Loretta Credo, member of Metairie Ridge Presbyterian Church, acknowledged the Native American peoples who lived on the land that is now called Metairie. Historical inhabitants of Metairie area included the Chitimacha Tribe, with Atakapa, Caddo, Choctaw, Homa and Natchez Tribes inhabiting Louisiana. Loretta also noted that PC(USA) leaders met with leaders of the Pointe au Chien Tribe on the day before the Meeting. Isabel S. Reivera-Velez, Commissioner, also mentioned the ancestral homelands of the Alabama Coushatta, Anadarko, Biloxi, Caddo, Chickasaw, Karankawa, Kichai, Muskogee, Shawnee, Tawakoni, and Tonkawa. We declare our respect for these children of God and our desire to honor them and the truth of their lives and history.

**Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum** – In accordance with the Bylaws, Sec. 3.1.3 whereby 50% or more of the elected commissioners constitutes a quorum, a quorum was declared by Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller. 17 of 28 Commissioners were present (*Attachment A*).

**Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors** – Corresponding Members and Visitors were also acknowledged and seated. Seth Saathoff moved and David Watson seconded that the Corresponding Members and visitors be seated and given privileges of the floor. Motion carried.

**Adoption of the Agenda** – With the meeting agenda presented, Stacy Clopton moved and Ron Fike seconded that the agenda be adopted. Motion carried (*Attachment B*).

**Approval of Minutes** – Moderator Davidson presented the minutes from the previous Synod Assembly on February 27, 2024, for approval. Without any additions or corrections, approval of the minutes for the Stated Meeting on October 2022 were moved by Seth Saathoff and seconded by David Watson. Motion carried (*Attachment C*).

**Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report** – Synod Leader Mitch Miller reported to the Assembly. He reported that it has been a busy few months since our last meeting and he has visited quite a few of the Presbyteries since becoming the SL/SC. (*Attachment D*).

**Synod Moderator Report** – Moderator Ben Davidson reported to the Assembly, telling the stories of serving as Moderator for 2024. Ben highlighted that the Synod has been responding to its call during the transition to our new SL/SC, going with the strengths that we have.

Highlights of 2024:

Calling Mitch Miller as our Synod Leader/Stated Clerk

We committed to increase our support of SPDR.

We committed to increase support of the Hispanic Mission Ministries Network.

We committed to support our smaller congregations with lay leadership.

We committed to increase our support of the Synod Youth Workshop and the Grants and Scholarship Commission.

We are going to move forward with a Border Ministries Network.

**Coordinating Team Report** (*Attachment E*) – Coordinating Team Moderator Seth Saathoff reported on actions taken by the CT on behalf of the Synod. Conducting the business of the Synod between gatherings, the CT took action to onboard the new SL/SC, worked on the Synod finances with Bill Wiles, committed to the continuing support of the three Oklahoma presbyteries as they discern their future together, planned this Assembly, and served as the de facto Nominating Committee.

**Personnel Committee Report** – Committee Moderator David Watson reported to the Assembly. Personnel is moving forward to the hiring of a part-time Administrative Assistant and providing help for SPDR. A group has been put together to interview the candidates and will move forward.

**Committee on Representation Report** (*Attachment F*) – Committee Moderator Minwoo Kim reported on behalf of the committee. The focus of the committee has been on communication. Communication between the Korean and Hispanic congregations and the Synod, with the suggestion that the Synod be more proactive in providing translation for Synod functions. Minwoo reported that the committee has only four of the needed six people and are seeking additional members.

**Empowering Committee Report** – Committee Moderator River-Velez reported on behalf of the Committee. Isabel reported that Empowering supports the Network for Dismantling Racism, the Hispanic Missions Ministry Network, Synod Youth Workshop, and is working to the creation of a Border Ministries Network.

Commissioner Leah McFaddin reported on Synod Youth Workshop (*Attachment G*), highlighting an increasing attendance and scholarships presented.

Commissioner Carlos Baladez and Lisa Almon reported on the work of the Hispanic Missions Ministry Network, highlighting the HMMN Leadership Workshops taking place throughout the Synod and via streaming.

Commissioner Kristy Rodgers reported on the Network for Dismantling Racism, mentioning that the Network continuing with its mission under new challenges. This includes a partnership with

Rev. Jermaine Ross Allen with the PCUSA's newly created Center for Repair of Historical Harms to gather our stories and historical harms and share them broadly.

**Connecting Committee Report** – Committee Moderator David Watson reported to the Assembly. David reported that the work of the Committee centers around the Covenant Partners, including Austin College, who will renew their Covenant Agreement with the Synod at this Assembly.

**Equipping Committee Report** (*Attachment H*) – Committee Moderator Kristy Rodgers reported on behalf of the Committee. Focusing on creating Elder Training and Suicide Prevention Training, the Committee is looking forward to contributing to our upcoming Synod School.

### **Commissions/Entities**

**Grants and Scholarship Commission Report** (*Attachment I*) – Commission member Lisa Almon reported on behalf of the Commission. Lisa reported that the Commission gave out over \$92k in 2024. She also reported that there are a number of openings in the committee.

**Synod Partnership for Disaster Response** (*Attachment J*) – In the absence of Kathy Lee-Cornell, Director of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Response, Moderator Davidson reported on SPDR. Ben talked about the amazing work of SPDR and how well it is received throughout the Synod and the Assembly watched a presentation about the Liaison Program. SL/SC Miller reported on the great need for disaster preparation and recovery, with 1/3 of all disasters in the US in 2023 occurred in the Synod of the Sun. Mitch reminded the Assembly that we are in the final year of the three-year program and that it is important that this program continue on beyond that initial commitment.

**Oklahoma Tri-Presbyteries Report** – Corresponding member Tim Blodgett, General Presbyter of Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, reported on the work of the Oklahoma Presbyteries Task Force. This group has been about the work of discerning and designing a plan to create a new Oklahoma presbytery. In many ways, the three presbyteries have already begun living in ministry together in programs in ministry.

**Nominations** – Moderator Davidson introduced Commissioner Ron Fike from Cimarron Presbytery to be the Vice-Moderator of the Synod in 2025. By unanimous vote, Ron was elected Vice-Moderator.

**TPF Update on Funds Investment** – Rick Young, President of the Texas Presbyterian Foundation spoke about the mission and ministry of TPF, the dangers of “not asking” and about the gift of legacy gifts. Celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year, TPF offered to each presbytery to pay for one of the meals at a Presbytery meeting.

**Presentation of the 2025 Preliminary Budget** (*Attachment K*) – Treasurer Bill Wiles presented for consideration the 2025 Budget. Bill opened with the idea of bringing a Joe Park from Horizons Stewardship to the Synod to talk about how we maximize giving. Bill took the Assembly through the budget with a new format.

On behalf of the Coordinating Team, Moderator Davidson moved the approval of the budget. The budget was approved.

**Signing of Covenant Agreement** (*Attachment L*) – Connecting Committee Moderator David Watson and Austin College Senior Associate Vice President Suzanne Crouch presented the renewal of a Covenant Agreement with Austin College. After signing the agreement, Suzanne spoke of how Austin College continues the Covenant made at a child's Baptism. Thanks to a generous gift, Suzanne reported that Presbyterian students can attend Austin College tuition-free.

**Installation of 2025 Moderator** – In the space of worship, Commissioner Sharon Curry was installed as the 2025 Moderator of Synod of the Sun by the Rev. Alonzo Johnson, the Coordinator for the Self-Development of People program.

Following her installation, Sharon shared her vision for the Synod in 2025, redefining the many roles that we have, take a good look at our structures and discern where God is taking us to next. Sharon extended an invitation for the members of the Assembly to decide in what manner they would like to serve in the coming year. Sharon wants to restart our Commissioned Pastors Network and rebuild the Grants and Scholarship Commission.

With the Assembly's business concluded in prayer, the meeting was adjourned.





**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

**Covenant Agreement:  
NOROC**

# **Covenant Between the Synod of the Sun and NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children)**

## **DRAFT: For Discussion and Revision**

**Preamble** The Synod of the Sun and NOROC enter into this covenant as partners in mission, united by our shared faith in Christ and a mutual commitment to serve vulnerable children and communities. This covenant builds on a history of collaboration between the Synod and NOROC, which began with NOROC's founding in 1997 at First Central Presbyterian Church in Abilene, Texas by a dynamic missions-oriented couple, Dr. Fred and Carolyn White. By their leadership, their church made NOROC its mission, and in short order, Palo Duro Presbytery made it their validated mission, too. In 2022, Palo Duro Presbytery unanimously voted to call, ordain, and install the Reverend Kristen Harris to NOROC as the Mission Co-Worker; they also committed to fund the position. Over the years, individuals and churches across the Synod have generously supported NOROC's work through prayers, donations, volunteer service, and leadership participation.

This covenant affirms and formalizes the partnership, outlining mutual commitments to strengthen NOROC's mission of providing spiritual, emotional, physical, and educational support to at-risk children in Tulcea County, Romania, and beyond.

## **Shared Mission and Vision**

The Synod of the Sun and NOROC recognize our shared call to care for "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40) and to walk alongside the most vulnerable in God's world. Together, we seek to respond to Christ's call to serve:

- Children raised in Tulcea County's group homes, many of whom have been orphaned or removed from their families due to neglect, abuse, or abandonment.
- Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) impacted by war, including those who have sought shelter in Tulcea County and those served through aid distributions in Romania and Ukraine.
- Churches, communities, and individuals in the Synod of the Sun, encouraging them to live into their calling as mission partners through prayer, presence, and partnership with NOROC.

## **Mutual Commitments**

### **NOROC's Commitments**

NOROC commits to:

- 1 Continue providing Christ-centered care and support to vulnerable children in Tulcea County and Ukraine.

- 2 Maintain transparency by sharing a yearly financial report.
- 3 Provide regular updates to the Synod through newsletters, social media, and in-person reports.
- 4 Offer opportunities for mission engagement, including service-learning trips to Romania and visits from the NOROC mission co-worker.
- 5 Invite Synod leaders to witness and participate in NOROC's work in Romania, deepening the partnership through shared experiences and learning.

### **Synod of the Sun's Commitments**

The Synod of the Sun commits to:

- 1 Promote NOROC's mission across its congregations and networks, encouraging individuals and churches to become mission partners.
- 2 Share NOROC's stories, campaigns, and needs through Synod communications, including newsletters, social media, and events.
- 3 Facilitate connections with individuals and churches that may be interested in mission engagement or service-learning trips.

### **Options for Additional Commitments**

#### **Board Membership**

The Synod of the Sun leaders have an open invitation to attend any meeting of NOROC's Board of Directors, fostering communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding between the two organizations.

#### **Financial Commitment**

The Synod of the Sun will consider exploring opportunities to contribute to NOROC's financial resources as needs and opportunities are identified.

#### **Opportunities for Engagement**

NOROC's mission co-worker or another voting member of NOROC's Board of Directors will attend and participate in at least one Synod gathering each year to share updates, stories, and opportunities for mission engagement. The Synod will extend invitations to NOROC leadership for relevant gatherings, fostering deeper connections and mutual learning.

## **Duration and Review**

This covenant will remain in effect for five years and will be reviewed at its conclusion to celebrate progress and discern the future of the partnership.

## **Signatures**

This covenant is entered into by:

For the Synod of the Sun:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For NOROC:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

# Approval of 2025 Budget

2.16.24

# Synod of the Sun

## *2025 Budget Packet*

*William M. (Bill) Wiles  
Treasurer, Synod of the Sun*

## **Synod of the Sun**

### Notes to the 2025 Budgets

Below are some general notes to assist you in wading through the 2025 budgets for the Synod of the Sun:

1. This is a new budget format. There are three major sections to the budget:
  - a. The unrestricted funds or operating budgets (pages 1 through 4).  
The current 2025 uses of the Synod-designated reserve funds (5).
  - b. The projected 2025 funds available to the Grants and Scholarship Commission (pages 6-7).
2. There are several new and expanded areas of mission and ministry focus in the 2025 budget. Please look specifically at the yellow highlights on page 2.
  - a. Our Synod Leader, Rev. Mitch Miller, is working on a re-launch of the Synod School to provide a forum for learning, sharing best practices, and building personal relationships across the four states of our Synod.
    1. Budget support: \$12,500
  - b. The Synod leadership team is focusing on some specific areas of mission and ministry for this year:
    - i. Increasing resources targeted at supporting and encouraging Hispanic ministries and their congregations.
      1. Budget support: \$23,000
    - ii. We are identifying and securing resources for us by the presbyteries and churches across the Synod as they deal with the requirements for increased training in the areas of identifying unacceptable employee behaviors.
      1. Budget support: \$3,000 plus services from the Insurance Board
  - c. We are providing more resources for the work of the Synod Youth Workshops including the purchase of new AV equipment which will save them money previously used for equipment rental. A big budget item is \$15,000 to be use for scholarships for those attending the Tulsa youth event.
    1. Budget support: \$25,000
  - d. We are providing more support for the work of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery.
    1. Budget support: \$23,000
  - e. We are committing to providing a \$100 scholarship for our Synod youth to attend Triennium. Ten such scholarships will be available for each presbytery:
    1. Budget support: \$11,000

- f. Stewardship Kaleidoscope will be hosted within our boundaries this year (New Orleans). We have committed to being a sponsor and to pay for two representatives to attend the event.
    - 1. Budget support: \$1,350
  - g. We are providing funds in 2025 for Hispanic and Korean translation resources for Synod-related meetings:
    - 1. Budget support: \$2,000
  - h. We are restarting our support of three children's homes within our boundaries as set forth in the Albert Crisp endowment funds:
    - 1. Budget support: \$12,000
  - i. We continue to emphasize grants and scholarships for camps and conferences as faith building opportunities for our youth. We continue to underwrite the costs of preparation for ministry including support for our commissioned pastors and lay leaders. The larger amounts of our 2024 support for mission and ministry across the Synod are shown on pages 8 and 9.
    - 1. Budget support: \$180,000+
3. In order to fund these new and expanded mission and ministry efforts, each of our committees and commissions have worked hard to focus their efforts in specific areas rather than the more shot-gun approach budgeted in previous years. Your committees and commissions are staffed by people who are committed to spreading the Gospel across our Synod.
4. Lastly, this budget begins a process of looking at our cash reserve and investment funds as sources to augment our annual budgets. We need to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us investing them wisely and allowing them to grow in value. But we also need to make sure that these funds are used for their primary purpose...proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your Synod leadership team seeks to walk a responsible balance between these two goals.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Coordinating Team  
William M. (Bill) Wiles, Treasurer



**SYNOD OF THE SUN**  
**2025 Budget Packet**

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What is included in this financial packet:

Operating Budgets.....	1
Detailed Expense Schedules.....	2-4
Use of Synod-Designated Funds.....	5
Grants & Scholarships Commission:	
Grants Funds.....	6
Scholarship Funds .....	7
Grants, Scholarships, Support 2024.....	8-9

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## Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

### 2025 Budgets

#### Use of Unrestricted Incomes

<u>Unrestricted Incomes</u>	<u>12.31.24 Actual</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Budget</u>	
40001 Previous year roll-over funds	60,000	60,000	60,000	
Presbytery Contributions (even years)	75,431	89,000	80,000	
42110 Unrestricted Mission Support (SOSFD)	246,314	208,000	221,700	
42110 Administration Support (SOSFD)	88,200	91,000	80,550	
42100 Contributions	0	1,000	500	
42150 Special Contributions--Mission Presbytery	23,554	0	0	
42210 PILP Interest Earned	2,459	4,000	3,500	
44000 Other Income	716	25,000	15,000	
43100 Communication Services	66,466	65,000	74,500	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<u>563,140</u>	<u>543,000</u>	<u>535,750</u>	100%
<b><u>Unrestricted Expenses (See Detailed Expense Schedule)</u></b>				
61000 Connecting Expenditures	0	18,000	9,500	2%
62001 Equipping	11,256	45,000	28,400	5%
63000 Empowering	21,906	41,000	26,000	5%
64001 Coordinating Team	138,471	121,250	107,750	20%
65000 Personnel	324,104	331,549	363,000	68%
66001 Grants and Scholarships (#61040)	14,257	25,000	25,000	5%
66002 Representation		1,000	2,000	0%
66003 Permanent Judicial Commission	0	2,000	1,000	0%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>509,994</u>	<u>584,799</u>	<u>562,650</u>	105%
Excess of Income over Expenses	<u>53,146</u>	<u>(41,799)</u>	(26,900)	-5%
95500 Equipment Purchases			<u>(11,000)</u>	
<b>Budgeted Deficit</b>			<u>(37,900)</u>	

**Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.**  
**Budgets for 2025**  
**Detailed Expense Schedule**

		12.31.24	2024	Proposed
		Actual	Budget	2025
		Budget		
<b>Administration &amp; Operations</b>				
<b>Connecting Expenditures</b>				
61080	Presbyterian Women	0	500	500
61100	Covenant Relationship Travel	0	4,000	2,000
61110	Lyon College	0	100	100
61120	Austin College	0	100	100
61130	University of Ozarks	0	100	100
61140	Schreiner University	0	100	100
61150	Trinity University	0	100	100
61160	Tulsa University	0	100	100
61170	PanAmerican School	0	100	100
61180	Austin Seminary	0	100	100
61190	Presby Children's Home & Service	0	100	100
61200	Evergreen Presby. Ministries	0	100	100
61210	Vera Loyd Home & Family	0	100	100
61220	Goodland Academy	0	100	100
61230	Mo Ranch	0	100	100
61240	Presby. Historical Society of SW	0	100	100
61250	Texas Presbyterian Foundation	0	100	100
61260	Multi-Cultural Youth Conf.	0	3,500	3,500
61302	Connecting Initiatives	0	5,000	1,000
61310	Critical Needs Fund	0	2,000	0
61330	National Event Hospitality	0	1,500	1,000
	Totals	0	18,000	9,500
<b>Equipping Expenditures</b>				
61030	COM Event	0	10,000	0 1
61035	Development Courses	0	10,000	0 1
61060	<b>Sexual Misconduct Training Resources</b>			3,000
61270	<b>Synod School</b>			12,500
61280	Clerk Forum	0	3,000	0 1
61070	EP Forum	9,713	18,000	10,000
62030	CSP Operations (clearing account)	1,459	0	0
62060	Synod Marketing Materials	84	4,000	2,400
64160	Racial Ethnic Ministries	0	0	500
	Totals	11,256	45,000	28,400
				1 Included under Synod School
<b>Empowering Expenditures</b>				
61020	Solar Under the Sun	1,343	0	0
61050	Network Nurture	6,122	5,000	5,000
61100	Hispanic Mission Ministries Network	6,000	3,000	3,000
	<b>Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today</b>	0	0	10,000
	<b>(Additional funding in G&amp;S Section)</b>			
XXX	IMAGINE Event	2,642	27,000	0 1
	<b>Synod Partnership for Disaster: Support</b>	2,299	2,500	3,000
	<b>(Additional funding in Reserve Section)</b>			
61270	Synod Youth Workshop	3,500	3,500	5,000
	<b>(Additional funding in Reserves and Equipment Purchase Sections)</b>			
	Totals	21,906	41,000	26,000
				1 Rolled into Synod School

**Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.**  
**Budgets for 2025**  
**Detailed Expense Schedule**

		12.31.24	2024	Proposed 2025
		Actual	Budget	Budget
<b>Coordinating Team</b>				
61340	Moderator Expenses	0	2,000	1,000
62040	Computer Hardware & Subscriptions	1,006	2,000	500
62050	Online Operations	8,102	5,000	5,000
62055	Online Processing Fees	437	250	250
62057	Synod Leader Discretionary Fund		10,000	10,000
64010	Stated Meeting, Fall	21,888	25,000	22,000
64020	Stated Meeting, Spring	5,001	0	7,000
64030	Leadership Gathering	10,556	0	10,000
64045	General Assembly (accrual)	6,502		3,000
64050	Administrative Commission		5,000	1,000
64100	Other Committee Expenses		10,000	1,000
66000	Office Expenses			0
66010	Office Rent		0	0
66020	Telephone		3,000	0
66030	Postage	917	1,000	1,000
66040	Copiers	88		0
66050	Supplies	870	3,000	1,000
66060	File Retention/Storage	5,810	5,000	1,000
66070	Bookkeeping Services	51,367	20,000	25,000
66071	Audit Fees	500	5,000	8,000
66090	Insurance	6,687	5,000	7,000
66100	Bank Charges	821	500	1,000
66105	APLOS Fees	1,825	1,500	2,000
66110	Miscellaneous Charges	75	1,000	0
66120	Contingency		1,000	1,000
65420	Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Search	16,019	16,000	0
	Totals	<u>138,471</u>	<u>121,250</u>	<u>107,750</u>
<b>Personnel Expenditures</b>				
65010	Synod Leader/SC Salary & House	122,167	103,000	103,000
65020	Synod Leader/SC BOP	39,205	40,170	40,170
65030	Synod Leader/SC FICA Share	7,893	6,200	6,200
65040	Synod Leader/SC Prof Expenses	150	1,500	1,500
65050	Synod Leader/SC Prof Development	43	2,500	2,500
65510	Synod Leader/SC Travel	30,264	24,500	24,500
	Synod Leader Totals	<u>199,722</u>	<u>177,870</u>	<u>177,870</u>
65110	Comm & Admin Coordinator Salary	63,947	61,579	61,579
65120	Comm & Admin Coordinator BOP	20,805	18,100	18,100
65130	Comm & Admin Coord. Payroll Taxes	4,570	4,500	4,500
65140	Comm & Admin Coordinator Prof Dev.	1,500	1,500	1,500
65520	Comm & Admin Coordinator Travel	2,161	2,500	2,500
	Comm & Admin Totals	<u>92,983</u>	<u>88,179</u>	<u>88,179</u>
65170	Treasurer Salary	13,500	18,000	18,000
65180	Treasurer Payroll Taxes	1,033	0	0
	Treasurer Prof Expenses	1,666	2,000	2,000
	Treasurer Travel	0	1,000	1,000
	Totals	<u>16,199</u>	<u>21,000</u>	<u>21,000</u>
	Administrative Assistant	0	27,500	27,500
65220	CSP Contract Services	15,200	15,000	15,000
65410	Personnel Committee	0	2,000	1,000
	Salary Adjustment Allowance			32,451
	Personnel Totals	<u>324,104</u>	<u>331,549</u>	<u>363,000</u>

**Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.**  
**Budgets for 2025**  
**Detailed Expense Schedule**

		12.31.24	2024	Proposed
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>2025</u>
		<u>Budget</u>		
<b>Grants and Scholarships</b>				
61040	New Covenant Presbytery	2,182		
	Grace Presbytery	2,075		
	Kin-dom Community	5,000		
	Tres Rios Presbytery	5,000		
	Totals	<u>14,257</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
<b>New Equipment Purchases</b>				
95500	Coordinating Team: Computer Hardware			2,000
95500	Equipping: DSLR Digital Camera			1,000
95500	Synod Youth Workshop: AV Equipment			5,000
95500	Personnel: Equipment for new hire			3,000
	Totals			<u>11,000</u>

1 SYW provides \$4,000 match

## Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. Budgets for 2025 Use of Synod Designated Funds

TPF Investment Funds Available for Use	Projected Balance @ 1.1.2025	Projected 2025 Income	Projected 2025 8% Gains	Projected Total Funds Available	2025 Projected Distribution	Description of Use	Projected Balance @ 12.31.2025
PILP Certificate of Deposit	100,000	Income budget		100,000			100,000
Gatewood Account #51392	645,645	23,500	51,652	720,797	(11,000)	Triennium scholarships	708,447
Ministry Reserves #54201	60,257	2,200	4,821	67,278	(1,350)	Stewardship Kaleidoscope	67,278
Year-End Reserves #54495	56,048	2,000	4,484	62,532			62,532
Disaster Assistance #54825	14,385		1,151	15,536			15,536
Regional PDA #55716	143,389		11,471	154,860	(20,000)	Quarterly Pledge	134,860
	<u>1,019,724</u>	<u>27,700</u>	<u>73,578</u>	<u>1,121,002</u>	<u>(32,350)</u>		<u>1,088,652</u>
<b>Cash Balances Held for Use</b>							
10100 Gatewood Funds	175,661				(15,000)	SYW Scholarships	160,661
33100 Ministry Reserves	5,489						5,489
33110 Year-End Reserves	5,106						5,106
33120 Disaster Assistance	357						357
31140 Translation Fund	29,726				(2,000)	Korean/Hispanic Services	27,726
31150 Future Church	0						0
31160 Racial Ethnic Ministries	0						0
31180 Special Meetings	17,862						17,862
31190 Synod Leadership Travel	5,512						5,512
31220 COR Network	471						471
31222 Commissioned Pastors Network	15,121						15,121
31250 Promotional Swag	1,957						1,957
31260 Network Reserves	30,121						30,121
31280 Presby. Leader Formation	14,234						14,234
31300 International Mission trips	800						800
32130 Opioid Crisis	500						500
32140 Network for Dismantling Racism	0						0
32155 ESL Scholarship Fund	25,000						25,000
	<u>327,917</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(17,000)</u>		<u>310,917</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<u>1,347,641</u>	<u>27,700</u>	<u>73,578</u>	<u>1,121,002</u>	<u>(49,350)</u>		<u>1,399,569</u>



## Synod of the Sun 2025 Budgets

<b>Synod Reserves Delegated to Grants &amp; Scholarships Commission</b>		Projected Balance	Projected 2025 Incomes	Available Funds 2025	Projected 2025 Awards	Projected Balance @12.31.2025
		@1.1.2025				
<b>Funds For Grants</b>						
<b>Synod Designated Cash Reserves</b>						
31270	Gross Cultural Intern	0		0		0
<b>Donor Restricted Cash Reserves</b>						
33130	David Robinson Fund	1,744	890	2,634		2,634
33188	Church Extension/DevImp	19,881	7,900	27,781		27,781
31160	Racial Ethnic Ministries	0	0	0		0
33210	Higher Education	66,583	19,200	85,783		85,783
33170	Peacemaking	1,593	280	1,873		1,873
33187	Aid for Pastors	9,117	3,500	12,617		12,617
33189	National Missions in Texas	26,610	7,900	34,510		34,510
33200	Old Age Concerns	129,920	23,500	153,420		153,420
	<b>Totals</b>	<u>255,448</u>	<u>63,170</u>	<u>313,881</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>318,618</u>

### **Donor Restricted Invested Funds (TPF)**

Albert Crisp Endowment #51737	107,260	14,000	121,260	(5,000)	116,260
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### **Synod Budget Funds to Grants & Scholarships**

61040 Mission Grant Funds	25,000	25,000	50,000		25,000
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## Synod of the Sun 2025 Budgets Synod Reserves Delegated to Grants & Scholarships Commission

		Projected Balance	Projected 2025	Projected Incomes	Available Funds	Projected 2025	Projected Awards	Projected Balance
		@1.1.2025			2025			@12.31.2025
<b>Funds For Scholarships</b>								
<b>Donor Restricted Cash Reserves</b>								
33140	Seminary Course Scholarships	9,758	670		10,428			10,428
22900	Seminary Student Scholarships	13,000	16,600		29,600			29,600
33150	Young Adult Volunteers	44,905	5,200		50,105			50,105
33160	Educational Programs	365	525		890			890
31300	International Mission Trips	5,800	0		5,800			5,800
33220	Schroeder Child & Youth Scholarships	0	2,400		2,400			2,400
	Schroeder Child & Youth Scholarships	0	486		486			486
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>73,828</b>	<b>25,881</b>		<b>99,709</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>99,709</b>

<b>Donor Restricted Invested Funds (TPF)</b>								
	Hispanic American Ministry	80,121	7,000		87,121			87,121
	MAPPA Fund #50900							
	Hispanic American Ministry	41,626	4,000		45,626	(10,000)	2	35,626
	MACC Fund #50901							
	Munson Kerr Scholarship #55474	1,408,942	120,000		1,528,942			1,528,942
	Albert Crisp Scholarship #51736	128,793	8,000		136,793	(7,000)	1	129,793
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,659,482</b>	<b>139,000</b>		<b>1,798,482</b>	<b>(17,000)</b>		<b>1,781,482</b>

1 Donor restrictions in the Albert Crisp Funds require distributions be made only to these recipients and in these percentages:  
 Presbyterian Children and Adult Services 50%  
 Goodland Academy 25%  
 Vera Loyd Homes 25%

2 Funds for Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today

<b>Endowment Pass-Thru Funds from Presbyterian Foundation</b>								
	Eshta Nowlin Scholarship Funds		320					320
	William & Ethel Hankins Fund #4		30					30
	William & Ethel Hankins Fund #5		30					30
	Viola Williams Memorial Fund		10					10
	<b>Totals</b>		<b>390</b>					<b>390</b>



**Synod of the Sun**  
**Grants, Scholarships, and Support 2024**

71100 Hispanic American	Scholarship	Adrian Rodriguez	5,000.00
71140 Seminary Scholarships	Scholarship	Caitlin Culp	4,500.00
		Miriam Ross	5,500.00
		Zachary Rivers	5,000.00
		Sarah Rutherford	4,000.00
		Kate McGee	1,500.00
71160 Educational Programs	Scholarship to attend PW	Shelley Wren Smith	300.00
		Mary Ann Thomas	300.00
71189 Volunteers in Mission	Grant	YAV diversity	10,000.00
		Enterprise rent car	811.03
71200 Old Age Concerns	Grant	PW church-wide gathering	5,000.00
		Waxahachie	5,000.00
		CARE services	
71210 Reserve for Higher ED	Grant	Winter College Min at John Knox Ranch	5,000.00
		John Knox Ranch travel expenses	1,000.00
		UCM at JKR	1,900.00
		Hispanic Campus Ministries @ JKR	5,000.00
		Winter College Min at John Knox Ranch	5,000.00
71910 SOSPF	Scholarship	Amanda McDonald	6,500.00
		Dubuque Seminary	
		Benny Thompson	2,500.00
		Dubuque Seminary	
73010 SPDR Support	Contribution	SPDR Quarterly	11,488.00
74100 OK Tri-presbytery planning	Support		1,564.74
	Grant	Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today	5,000.00
74130 Disaster Assistance	Support	Emergency Aid Palo Duro Presbytery Wild fires	15,000.00
74140 Translation Fund	Support	Translation svcs. Synod/SPDR	180.00
74150 Future Church	Support	Boundary Training	6,440.00
		Safe Gatherings	1,943.00
74240 Promotional Swag	Support	Branded clothing	132.60
74260 Cross cultural intern	Grant	Presbytery of South Louisiana	5,000.00

74270	Presbytery Leadership Formation	Support	Coaching for new EPs in Synod	3,000.00
74290	Mission Network Grants	Grant	Cimarron Presbytery	2,500.00
74300	International Mission Trips	Grant	University of Ozarks	1,700.00
		Grant	FPC San Anselmo	1,500.00
			Presbytery of Scioto Valley	5,000.00
74950	Network for Dismantling Racism	Support	Website maintenance	212.60
61040	Grants & Scholarships	Grant	New Covenant Pres.	2,182.00
			Grace Presbytery	2,075.00
			Tres Rios Presbytery	5,000.00
			Kin-dom Community	5,000.00
	Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery			
		Support	Budget Support	15,317.00
		Support	Budget Support	2,299.00
	Hispanic Ministry Network	Grant	Hispanic ministry	6,000.00
			Austin College event	5,000.00
	Synod Youth Workshop	Support	Budget Support	<u>3,500.00</u>
			<b>Total</b>	<u><u>180,844.97</u></u>

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**SYNOD LEADERSHIP EVENTS:**

Spring and Fall Assemblies	26,889
Leadership Meetings	10,556
EP Forum	9,713
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>47,158</u></u>



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

**Synod Leader/Stated Clerk  
Report**

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk Report: February, 2025 Synod Assembly

We welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Tammy Stepka to the staff. She is quickly proving to be invaluable as we finally find ourselves fully staffed and I trust can really begin to move forward with our plans to strength the mission and ministry of the Synod of the Sun in 2025 and beyond.

Again, we are thankful to our sisters and brothers in Grace Presbytery for their willingness to provide the Synod office space in the Presbyterian Mission Center in Irving.

We are excited to welcome back Kathy Lee-Cornell from maternity leave. Kathy's return to the Directorship of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery comes as we enter the last year of our four-year pilot project. The importance of this will be expanded upon later.

The Stated Clerks will be meeting immediately following this Assembly to review presbytery minutes for both 2023 and 2024.

In early January (5<sup>th</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup>) we held the annual Synod Leadership Retreat at MO Ranch. At this gathering we examined the work of the synod, and upon realization that, frankly, we do **a great many things**, we felt it was necessary to set some priorities for 2025. What follows are the top ten priorities we have set for our work.

At the top of that list is to ensure the continuation of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR). This means pledging our continued support for Kathy and her work and to begin seeking the funding we will need to move on into the future.

Second, as we will discuss at the Assembly, we will strive to make sure that our committees are fully staffed and working at optimum levels. I am asking two things of our commissioners: 1) look at the descriptions of the committees and their responsibilities and discern which one best suit your gifts, experience, and interest. We will do our best to place you where you can best serve the needs of the synod. 2) Look around at the people in your presbyteries that might have the gifts, experience, expertise, and interest that we might invite to serve on our committees as co-opted members, thereby strengthening our work and expanding our reach of knowledge and information in the presbyteries.

Third, it is no secret that the church needs more and new leadership. Our goal is to identify the leaders already among us, lift them up and encourage them to step forward. We want to make a concerted effort to identify those people with the gifts and talents to lead us in divine worship, and begin their process of discernment, encouragement, and training. Whether it is as simple as reading Scripture, sharing their gifts of music, or perhaps even preaching and pastoring, we are convinced that the worship leaders, commissioned pastors, and future called ministers of Word and Sacrament are already among us, hiding in our pews, and only need the encouragement of those whose eyes are open to seeing what they do not, cannot, or will not.

Storytelling has always been at the heart of human society and especially important for the transfer of faith and tradition. To that end, we have set as our fourth priority to be better at telling our stories. We need to share our stories of how the work of the Church, be it through programs, grants, worship, or the people who, through their personal expressions of their faith, have impacted our lives or the lives of our congregations. Sharing these stories is an important way for more people to be affected and our successful ministries might continue and expand their impact and funding.

Next on our list, (number 5) is to focus on giving and fundraising to support the work of the synod. We will work on creating a task force this Spring to begin the work of encouraging and developing more sources of income.

Sixth on the list, is to place greater focus on our support of immigrant fellowships and ministry. We cannot overlook the needs of these communities as they grow and thrive, even in this difficult and challenging time of political uncertainty. These communities are, we believe, an un-tapped resource of talent and Spiritual enrichment that are as crucial to the current state of the Church as they will be in the future.

Next, (number 7) we return to the on-going struggle of how best to strengthen, expand, support, and protect our ministries along the border. Nearly two thirds of which fall within the geographical boundaries of our synod. We hope to find ways to create opportunities for our existing ministries to cooperate more fully and seek ways to combine our efforts with the synods to our west.

Eight on our list of priorities is to create and encourage more events for gathering and training. Creating community, and fostering opportunities for fellowship, learning and mutual support has always been an important aspect of our advancement of society. This is even more so throughout the history of the Church. From the gathering of Jesus' first disciples up to this day, the need is undeniable.

Ninth on our list is the continued and enhanced support of youth and young adult ministries. Let us not fall into the trap of seeing them as only the future of the church, they are very much the key to an effective present. As you look up this list, one cannot miss how this goal intersects with so many of the goals above.

Finally last, but not least, is the continuation and expansion of our Communication Services Program. Elsewhere in the packet you will find information about the CSP and the incredible work of our communication director, Thomas Riggs.

These are certainly not all that we will be doing, and there are many other important tasks, both required by our charge as a synod and those we have always found the need to do. But with so much on our plate and so many challenges facing the Church, we felt it necessary to give some guidance and focus on our efforts and that of the synod staff in the coming year.

## Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report

Some of the Synod Leader's Activities since the last assembly:

- Attended presbytery meetings in Cimarron, Grace, New Covenant, and Southern Louisiana Presbyteries
- Attended the online EP Forum gatherings
- Represented the SOTS and participated in the inauguration of the new president of the Pan-American School in Kingsville, TX
- Led the Synod Leadership Retreat at Mo Ranch
- Represented the SOTS at the Spring meeting of the Solar Under the Sun Board
- Attended and led a part of the Indian Nations Presbytery Commissioned Preacher training event
- The first five people to ask me what and Elbedritsch is at the Assembly will receive a gift
- Met with representatives of five of our Covenant Partners regarding our Partnership Covenants
- Driven nearly 4000 miles and flew another 1500 miles.

Upcoming Dates:

February	17-18 SPDR Leadership Team Gathering (New Orleans, LA) 21 Arkansas Presbytery meeting (Lyon College) 22 Indian Nations Presbytery Meeting (Midwest City, OK) 23 EP Forum Gathering (Irving, TX) 24-25 Synod Assembly (Irving, TX) 26-26 Presbytery Clerks Gathering (Irving, TX)
March	1 Grace Presbytery Meeting (Longview, TX) 6-7 Tres Rios Presbytery Meeting (Seminole, TX) 7-8 Mission Presbytery Meeting (Kerrville, TX) 22 New Covenant Presbytery (Houston, TX)
April	12-16 Synod Executive Gathering (Jacksonville, FL) 25-26 Palo Duro Presbytery Meeting
May	1-4 Solar School (Ft. Worth, TX) 17 Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery Meeting 31 Grace Presbytery Meeting
June	7 Indian Nations Presbytery 16-18 EP Forum gathering in OKC 20-21 Mission Presbytery Meeting
July	10-22 NOROC Summer Service-Learning Trip (Tulcea, Romainia)

## Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report

2025 has already been a busy and exciting year. I maintain my stated goals be present for at least one meeting in each presbytery (preferably more), continue to preach when invited, and strengthen our covenant partnerships.

I welcome your questions, suggestions, input, encouragement, and prayers.

Your Servant in Christ,

Mitch Miller



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

## **SPDR & CSP Reports**



## Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery

Synod of the Sun Assembly

February 2025 Report



**The SPDR Leadership Group (LG)** consists of Julia Farrell, Presbytery of the Pines (2025), Jim Kirk (2022), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; Matt Miles (2022), Tres Rios Presbytery; Cheryl Pennington (2024), Indian Nations Presbytery; Richard Williams (2022), Presbytery of South Louisiana; Mitch Miller (2024), Synod Leader and Stated Clerk, Synod of the Sun; and Bill Wiles (2024), Treasurer, Synod of the Sun.

The LG met in-person in February to develop a Transition Plan for SPDR as the pilot phase of the partnership concludes on December 31, 2025. The following motions were approved by the LG:

- Approved September 2024 meeting minutes.
- Reaffirm placing \$175,000 with New Covenant Trust Company for short term investment.
- Request current Covenant Partners (11 presbyteries, the Synod of the Sun, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) continue at their current funding level of SPDR for the next five years (2026-2030).
- Request that the Synod match the additional giving by presbyteries (up to \$20,000/year) from Synod reserves for the next five years.
- Seek additional funding from other interested parties to match the additional giving by presbyteries and the Synod.
- Request that the Synod explore engaging a grant writer to support Synod programming.

**Motion to Synod Assembly: The Synod of the Sun will match the additional giving by presbyteries above their current funding level up to \$20,000 per year from Synod reserves for the next five years.**

### **SPDR Director's Report**

Thank you to the Synod for your prayers and support as our family welcomed our daughter, Mila Fay, into our lives! The SPDR Liaisons Network stepped in during my time on parental leave. We now have a SPDR Liaison representing each of our 11 presbyteries: Nancy Bergeron (Pines), Mike Burnett (Tres Rios), Jim Ellor (Grace), Joe Gambill (Palo Duro), Rebecca Lovingood (South LA), Sandra Murray (Mission), Kathy Thomas (Cimarron, Eastern Oklahoma & Indian Nations), Charley Shurtz (New Covenant), and Ray Stephens (Arkansas). This group meets quarterly to share presbytery/congregational needs and to coordinate, collaborate, and connect resources around disaster preparedness and response.

In 2025, the SPDR Program goals include:

- 1.) Transitioning from a pilot to sustained disaster ministry program of the Synod.
- 2.) Tell the story of SPDR's impact and opportunities for ministry more broadly.
- 3.) Enhance the reach and depth of cultural/contextual disaster resources.
- 4.) Increase volunteerism and leadership within presbyteries.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Lee-Cornell, Director of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery

*The Synod of the Covenant*

Service for Victims  
of Domestic Violence in Milton

Prayer of South  
Carolina and prayer  
for ET. This  
is for  
and



View More News &  
Events Here



Seeking Full-Time Associate  
Executive for Racial Justice

The Synod is excited to open our search for a full-time Associate Executive for Racial Justice.



# The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

A ministry to and for the  
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Search...

Presbytery of  
North Carolina  
Three Covenant Communities

Committees Resources/COM Calendar News



Search...

WE ARE MISSION PRESBYTERY. SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORLD

**WE ARE BETTER  
TOGETHER**

FIESTA  
FREEZER POPS

# The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

## A ministry to and for the Presbyterian Church (USA)

### **Synod of the Sun**

Presbytery of Arkansas

Mission Presbytery

Pines Presbytery

Presbytery of South Louisiana

Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery

Indian Nations Presbytery

New Covenant Presbytery

### **Presbyteries**

Twin Cities Presbytery

Presbytery of Boise

Presbytery of Northern Kansas

Presbytery of Southern Kansas

Missouri Union Presbytery

Grand Canyon Presbytery

de Cristo Presbytery

Lackawanna Presbytery

Lehigh Presbytery

(Lackawanna and Leigh soon to merge)

Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

Northeast Georgia Presbytery

Presbytery of Wabash Valley

Trinity Presbytery

### **Synods**

Synod of the Covenant

Synod of South Atlantic

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Synod of the Southwest

### **Presbyterian Programs**

Spirit of Stewardship Conference

(Synod of Mid-America)

Assoc. of Mid Council Leaders

Presbyterian Leadership Formation Program

Borderlands YAV Program

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### **Projected Income 2024**

\$71,902

### **Projected Income 2025**

\$78,584

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### **Notes:**

We have 26 partners from four time zones.

We have added 14 new partners in 2023-24.

We generate between 8 and 12 newsletters or flyers every week.



**SYNOD  
OF THE SUN**

# Committee/Commission Reports

02/14/2025

**Empowerment Committee Report to the Synod of the Sun  
Spring Assembly**

It is with immense gladness and that we welcome former and newly added members to our Empowerment Committee. God has called us and we have responded with a joyful and a resounding, “YES!”

The Empowering Committee is continuing the work begun in 2024. We are grateful for the leadership of Rev. Isabel Rivera-Velez in 2024. The Moderator for 2025 is Carlos Baladez and Vice-Moderator is Leah McFadden. Our first meeting will be held on February 22.

The Empowering Committee will be focused on supporting our networks. Based on the goals outlined by the Synod of the Sun Leadership Team, the Empowering Committee will be particularly involved with Immigration Ministry, Border Issues, Youth, and Young Adult Ministries. Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN) of the Synod of the Sun / Red de Ministerios Hispanos del Sinodo del Sol “*Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders Today,*” and Synod Youth Workshop had very successful initiatives in 2024 (see attached reports) and we are excited to continue and expand this great work. The committee will continue working to develop a Border Ministry network. This effort was put on hold until after the presidential election to get a better idea of the needs in 2025.

We look forward, with God’s grace, to see what other opportunities our Good Lord opens for us in 2025.

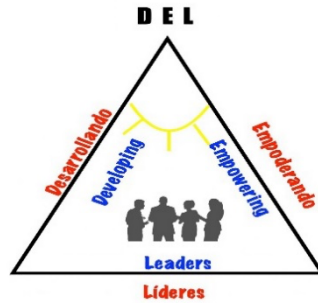
Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos Baladez, Ph.D. - Moderator Empowering Committee

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HISPANIC MINISTRIES MISSION NETWORK (HMMN) of the SYNOD OF THE SUN /  
RED DE MINISTERIOS HISPANOS del SINODO DEL SOL



To our esteemed colleagues and siblings in Christ, greetings!

God is on the move and we are privileged to be riding the crest of grace!

It is with great joy that HMMN reports the following updates regarding our God-given vision of “Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders Today.”

As previously reported, we launched this vision on September 7, 2024 with our first workshop hosted by First Presbyterian Church in New Braunfels, TX. We held three workshops in 2024 and scheduled three more for 2025. In 2024, “Developing the Leader within You,” was held in September, “Worship Leadership, Session Leadership, and Outreach Leadership,” in October, and “Leadership in the Pulpit: How to Write and Deliver a Sermon,” in November. At the end of each workshop, participants were encouraged to put their learning into practice. At the November workshop, the attendees were encouraged to write a sermon, ask their respective leadership to give them an opportunity to deliver their sermon, and report back in January to share their experience with the rest of the group. To our great delight, three Elders crafted a sermon and delivered it. The reports were inspirational and heartwarming. In one particular case, the pastor was out sick and one of the elders was out of town. The reminding Session members were going to cancel a Christmas Eve service because “there was no one to fill the pulpit.” One of our workshop attendees spoke up and said, “Why then have we been going to these workshops? Now is our opportunity to rise up to the occasion,” and they did! It was reported that they had a WONDERFUL worship service. All glory, honor, and praise to our Loving God!

We took December off to celebrate the holiday season. We resumed our workshops in January with “Growing Young Disciples - Gen Alpha (2010-2024),” followed by one in February. This workshop was focused on “Prayer and Discipleship, New Elder and Deacon Training, and How to get church members more involved in community outreach, and Presbyterian youth camps and conferences.”

Our last workshop will be held at the annual HMMN gathering at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary where the topics will cover “IT and Social Platforms,” and “Music and Song in Worship.”

In addition to First Presbyterian Church in New Braunfels, other host churches have been Memorial Presbyterian Church, San Marcos, TX, and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, TX. We are indebted to these churches and are grateful for them “catching” the vision. Each church provided a delicious meal for all the participants to enjoy.

## Empowering Committee

We are also indebted to our presenters, Jose and Gracie Munoz, Estela Sifuentes, Lisa Almon, Bernabe Martinez, and Carlos Baladez. We also give thanks for our sound/video engineers; Westley Morris, Miles Wortham, Christina Buruato. We also give thanks to our planning team for “fleshing out,” the logistics and the needs of each workshop.

Our workshops have been attended by members from nine different churches and four different presbyteries with in our Synod; Mission, Grace, New Covenant, and Arkansas.

Thus far, adding up all five workshop, we have had a total of 106 in-person attendees and 29 participants on Zoom, of whom 51 have been different people. We even had a two pastors join us on Zoom; one a Methodist pastor from Chicago and the other, a Presbyterian pastor from Mazatlán, Mexico. This outreach has been made possible by Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Mission Presbytery, Synod of the Sun, and HMMN’s Face Book page announcing our workshops and posting our fliers on their respective websites and newsletters inviting one and all to come. These fliers announced our workshops in Spanish and in English. Attendees have included youth and adults, bilingual attendees and Spanish and English only speaking guests.

Thus far, participants have planted a total of \$839.00 into this vision. Of these funds, 90% has been reinvested directly into HMMN and of the tithe, 3% has been sown back into Mission Presbytery and the other 7% into the Synod of the Sun to be used to fund other dreams in other parts of God’s Vineyard.

One more item to report. The Rev. Princeton Abaraoha, representing the African immigrant community for the Synod of the Sun, reached out to HMMN, expressing that his community also has the same needs as those identified by HMMN. He communicated to us that there are nine different African countries, with nine different languages, in need of our workshops. We have agreed to provide him with our PowerPoint slides, free of charge, which are in Spanish and in English, to be used for these congregations. He, along with respective representative, will translate the slides into their own languages and use them here in the USA and also back in their native countries to “Develop Tomorrow’s Leaders Today.” God is GOOD!

With grateful hearts, we continue to seek God’s holy and perfect will as we plan out the rest of 2025 and beyond!

To God be all the glory, honor, and praise!

Respective Submitted on behalf of HMMN,

Carlos Baladez, Ph.D.

### HMMN Officers

Lisa Almon, Co-Moderator, Miguel Carlin, Secretary. Ruth Román-Meza, Historian, Bernabé Martínez, Treasurer

Synod Youth Workshop Report  
Spring Assembly 2025

The Planning Team and Staff are hard at work planning Synod Youth Workshop 2025. The theme is “Let Light Lead” and we are excited to hear God’s word for us around this theme. Registration is now open. The conference will be held at the University of Tulsa July 14 - 19.

Rev. Alex Pappas is our keynote speaker. She recently served as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Shreveport, Louisiana and is now serving as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Georgetown, Texas. Alex grew up in Grace Presbytery, attending SYW. She has also served as an adult Small Group Leader. She brings a unique perspective as a former youth participant and we are confident that God will speak through her the words our youth need to hear.

Nine youth are serving on Planning Team and will be very involved in leading the conference. They represent congregations in Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri. Planning Team and Staff will meet for the second planning meeting March 8 - 9.

The Leadership Team is grateful for the \$15,000 awarded by Synod of the Sun for scholarships. Everyone is working to promote the conference and get the word out that scholarships are available. It is our hope that this money will be used to better include participants from all areas of our synod and that anyone who wants to attend will be able to.



Respectfully submitted,

Leah McFadden

SYW Leadership Team

Vice-Moderator Empowering Committee

# Let Light Lead

SYNOD '25



Small  
Groups



Worship

# Synod Youth Workshop

JULY 14 - 19, 2025



Service  
Projects

WHERE: UNIVERSITY OF TULSA

COST: \$395 YOUTH & ADULTS

WHO: RISING 9TH GRADERS  
THROUGH GRADUATING  
SENIORS



Keynote  
Speaker

Rev. Alex  
Pappas

[www.synodyouthworkshop.com](http://www.synodyouthworkshop.com)



## Connecting Committee

### Synod of the Sun - Connections Committee

#### AGENDA and MINUTES

Called Meeting Monday, January 6, 2025 2:00 P.M. Nickolas Place, Mo Ranch

- I. Welcome and Opening Prayer Moderator Polly Williams

The meeting opened at 10am. Polly agreed to serve as clerk. Also attending Vice Moderator Princeton Abaraoha.

- II. Per the request of Rich Dunsworth, President of the University of Ozarks, thanks was given for the witness of Rev. Dr. Gary Dill formerly representing Synod of the Sun to the Board of Trustees for the University of Ozarks per the covenant relationship.  
Rev Andrew Odom was nominated and appointed as the liaison between the Synod of the Sun and University of the Ozarks' as Synod of the Sun's representative to the Board of trustees.  
Princeton made the motion, Polly offered a second. Both Polly and Princeton voted, "yes." The motion carried unanimously.
- III. Approved the wording for a new covenant partnership with NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children) through the First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, Palo Duro Presbytery. Princeton made the motion, Polly offered a second. Both Polly and Princeton voted, "yes". The motion carried unanimously.
- IV. Called meetings were set for 2025: monthly: Monday, February 10, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central, Monday, March 10, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, April 7, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, May 12, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, June 9, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, July 7, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, August 11, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, September 8, 2025 via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, October 13, 2025, via zoom at 2pm central; Monday, November 10, 2025 via zoom at 2pm; and Monday, December 8, 2025 via zoom at 2pm.
- V. Motion to adjourn carried.

Submitted with prayer and praise, Polly Williams, Vice Moderator, Connections Committee, Synod of the Sun

### Synod of the Sun - Connections Committee

#### AGENDA and MINUTES

Stated Meeting Monday, February 10, 2025 2:00 P.M. Nickolas Place, Mo Ranch

- I. Welcome and Opening Prayer - Moderator Polly Williams, also present Vice Moderator Princeton Abaraoha.
- II. Reported a conversation with Stated Leader Mitch Miller hoping to get going on the goal of each covenant being a five year term concluding in year's ending in, "0" or "5".  
  
Proposed covenants are prepared for consideration with current covenant partners the Presbyterian Pan American School, the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest and Lyons College. Being in touch with each covenant partner as well as a few new and proposed covenant partners was discussed.
- III. Princeton closed with prayer. Submitted with prayer and praise, Moderator Polly Williams

# Notes – Synod of the Sun Spring Assembly 2025

“WHY, LORD, have I never won the lottery?”  
 “It would help me help you if you bought a ticket.”

There's no, “luck” to it. And we almost always know we are NOT God ☺. Providential past generosity and prayerfully discerning peers of yours who do our best to honor donor or Synod restrictions putting the synod's funds to work while considering future stewardship as best we can describe the Grants and Scholarship Commission (G&S) of Synod of the Sun(SoS) of 2025 at work.

We are: Polly Williams, Moderator/Chair; Lynn Hargrove, Vice Moderator/Vice Chair;

Todd Freeman, Commissioner from Oklahoma with voice and vote;

Lisa Almon representing HMMN, Hispanic Ministries and concerns as EX Officio with voice, no vote and a beautiful institutional memory serving this commission; and Mitch Miller and Bill Wiles as staff advisors.

We met Tues., Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> to consider 4th quarter 2024 requests and SoS Presbyterian Foundation aka MDiv scholarships.

**By Presbytery, awards to date:**

**Grace Presbytery: COMMUNITY BREAKFAST AND SACK LUNCH of First PC, Garland** \$5,000.00

**MIRANDA DOLIVE, MA Studies at Austin Seminary** \$1,946.25

This experienced Inquirer under care, whose witness and service to First, Longview has been invaluable received this award as 75% of one of her classes at Dubuque.

**Mission Presbytery COLTON HEDRICK** an inquirer under care, highly recommended \$3,000.00

by Rev. Dr. Joshua S. Robinson of Hope PC in Austin where Colton voluntarily attends Session and serves in the areas of CE, Worship, Music and Mission

**Presbytery of Arkansas: HONDURAS FAMILY MISSION TRIP** a powerful repeat mission trip \$1,500.00

to Honduras wherein the teens involved drag their parents, I mean, are joined with their parent(s) for building churches and homes. The developing adult and youth leadership and transformative experiences are a powerful witness.

**OZARK BORDER ENCOUNTER** Offer an alternate Spring Break: \$5,000.00

a transformational immersion wk at the US/Mexico Border that enhances learning through education, service and group reflection amongst a diverse group of students from various backgrounds, political and religious ideologies who are committed to building community and finding commonalities.

**Presbytery of South Louisiana: PROGRAM OF HOPE** Providing lodging, meals, necessities \$5,000.00

and as needed funds toward transportation, for homeless seniors, families and others.

**TOTAL AWARDED TO DATE: \$20,446.25**

**NOTE: TRIENNIUM AWARDS available:** on a recommendation from G&S, at the Coordinating Team meeting in February, ten (\$100 per participant) grants were made available for each presbytery.

**The deadline for the receipt of Triennium assistance applications is Tuesday, April 8, 2025** when all first quarter requests 2025 (due by March 31, 2024) will be considered. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, available funds for Triennium awards, not requested will be awarded and re-allotted to those presbyteries submitting early applications. We also meet

- (i) Tuesday, July 22, 2025 @ 2:30pm central via zoom: for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025 requests; and
- (ii) Tuesday, October 21, 2025 @ 2:30pm central via zoom; for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2025 requests.

Submitted with prayer and praise in Christ's name,

*The Rev. Miss Polly Warren Williams*

Moderator, Grants and Scholarship 2025, Synod of the Sun

[pollywarren@icloud.com](mailto:pollywarren@icloud.com)

214/740-0122



### **PW Moderator Report of Synod of the Sun Events**

**Presbyterian Women of Synod of the Sun are busily preparing for our up-coming PW Synod Gathering.**

**Please share the following information with the women of our Synod and plan to attend this exciting Event. Our Planning Team has been working diligently securing Speakers, Presenters, Plenary Programs, Worship Services, Tours, and delicious food!**

**It is going to be an interesting and delightful PW Synod Gathering!**

**Please visit our [SOSPWCONNECT](http://SOSPWCONNECT) website for more information including Registration and Scholarship Forms which will be added to our website in the coming weeks.**

**PW 2025 SYNOD GATHERING – July 24 – 26, 2025 “Our Joy Is in Christ”**

**First United Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas  
695 East Calvin Street, Fayetteville, Arkansas**

**Grace and Peace,**

**Sandra Hayes**

**Moderator of Presbyterian Women of Synod of the Sun**



# SYNOD OF THE SUN

**MAILING ADDRESS: 6100 Colwell Blvd., Suite 200, Irving, TX 75039 214-390-1894**

**MITCH MILLER, Synod Leader/Stated Clerk - [SYNOD.LEADER@SYNODSUN.ORG](mailto:SYNOD.LEADER@SYNODSUN.ORG)**

**KATHY LEE-CORNELL, Director, Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery**

**[KATHY.LEECORNELL@SYNODSUN.ORG](mailto:KATHY.LEECORNELL@SYNODSUN.ORG)**

**BILL WILES, Treasurer- [BWILES@CHOOSEGOD.ORG](mailto:BWILES@CHOOSEGOD.ORG)**

**THOMAS RIGGS, Communication and Administration Coordinator**

**[THOMAS.RIGGS@SYNODSUN.ORG](mailto:THOMAS.RIGGS@SYNODSUN.ORG)**

**TAMMY STEPKA, Interim Administrative Assistant – [TAMMY.STEPKA@SYNODSUN.ORG](mailto:TAMMY.STEPKA@SYNODSUN.ORG)**

**LINDSAY FREEMAN, COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACTOR - [CSP@SYNODSUN.ORG](mailto:CSP@SYNODSUN.ORG)**

**Sharon Curry,  
2025 Moderator**

**Ben Davidson,  
2025 Coordinating Team Chair**

**Rev. Ron Fikes,  
2026 Moderator**

