

Synod Stated Meeting
First Presbyterian Church | El Paso, TX
October 27, 2025

Welcome & Introductions –Synod Moderator Sharon Curry called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. CT.

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. 20 of 26 Commissioners were present (*Attachment A*).

Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors – Corresponding Members and Visitors were also acknowledged and seated. Ron Fike moved and Polly Williams seconded that the Corresponding Members and visitors be seated and given privileges of the floor. Motion carried (*Attachment A*).

Opening Prayer – Coordinating Team Moderator Ben Davidson opened the Assembly with prayer.

Adoption of the Agenda – With the meeting agenda presented, Polly Williams moved and Carlos Baladez seconded that the agenda be adopted. Motion carried (*Attachment B*).

Acknowledgement of Land & People – Commissioner Jerry Boles invited the attendees to pause and remember the Indigenous peoples who had lived on the land long before them, including the Mescalero Apache and the Lipan Apache. He offered thanks for the church's long-standing presence and contributions to the spiritual and social life of the border community since its founding in 1882. Jerry emphasized honoring the connection between people and the land, committing to Christ's boundless love, and allowing that love to transform them into a unified church family. He concluded with a reflection that their words, thoughts, and deeds might deepen their relationship with the Creator and foster a renewed connection to the land that sustains them.

Approval of Minutes – Moderator Curry presented the minutes from the previous Synod Assembly on February 24-25, 2025, for approval. Approval of the minutes for the Stated Meeting were moved by Ben Davidson and seconded by Ed Wolf. Motion carried (*Attachment C*).

Presentation by Presidente Pastor Felipe Barandiarán of R. Sinodo Nacional Del Noroestes - Presidente Felipe Manuel Pastor presented an overview of the National Northwest Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Mexico. He explained that the synod covered a vast territory, including Baja California, Durango, Monterrey, and Ciudad Juárez, and was organized into five presbyteries, some of which had recently been restructured. He introduced the leadership

team, including moderators and presidents of the various presbyteries, and described the synod's mission to support presbyteries through evangelism, education, resources, and prayer. Felipe emphasized the goal of fostering unity, cooperation, and mutual support among presbyteries, particularly along the border, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve, highlighting a commitment to giving and building relationships rather than merely receiving (*Attachment D*).

Finance Report and 2026 Proposed Budget – Treasurer Bill Wiles summarized the budget's three main components—cash income and expenses, reserve funds, and donor-restricted funds—while explaining accruals and deferred incomes that balanced the apparent \$21,000 deficit. The presenter highlighted that the Synod had approximately \$750,000 in operating cash, \$3.1 million in investments, and \$9 million managed by a supporting foundation, totaling about \$13.4 million in financial resources. He also shared that 80% of funds were allocated to programming, with only 20% to administrative costs, emphasizing that the 2026 budget allocated \$418,000 to programs like the Synod Youth Workshop and the Hispanic Mission Ministries Network, reinforcing the organization's healthy financial position and ongoing commitment to mission and ministry (*Attachment E*).

Bill asked representatives of Synod Youth Workshop and Hispanic Ministry Missions Network to talk about their ministries.

Commissioner Leah McFadden reported that the Synod Youth Workshop in July at the University of Tulsa was highly successful, with 146 participants from eight presbyteries across four states, supported by \$13,158 in scholarships from the Synod of the Sun. She invited alumnus William to share how his 2019 experience as a freshman inspired community building, faith-led service, and lifelong friendships, noting that many former participants now serve as adult leaders. The 2026 workshop was previewed, with keynote speaker Michael Eastman, broader presbytery participation encouraged, and the event scheduled for July 13–18 at Tulsa.

Commissioner Carlos Baladez shared how his mother's teaching to advocate for the vulnerable shaped his nursing career and later ministry work. Recognizing patients as human lives inspired him to help revitalize the struggling Hispanic Mission Ministries Network by launching "Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today," a leadership program funded through grants and workshops. The initiative trained participants to craft and deliver sermons, emphasizing that Christ equips all leaders and that no church is pastorless. It empowered young leaders to step into ministry, successfully leading services in pastors' absence, demonstrating the lasting impact of investing in people and fostering a mindset of service and abundance.

Following those presentations and on behalf of the Coordinating Team, Bill moved the proposed 2026 budget for the Synod of the Sun to Assembly for approval. Motion carried (*Attachment F*).

Human Resources Committee – Scott Campbell, Moderator of the Human Resources Committee, reported to the Assembly. Scott introduced the newly formed HR team and invited nominations for an additional member with significant HR experience. He reported that the HR team recommended, and the council approved, a 2.8% cost-of-living adjustment for staff, aligned with CPI and Social Security changes, emphasizing it was not merit-based. The team also highlighted a shift from traditional personnel management to a people-centered human resources approach, including increasing discretionary funds from \$10,000 to \$20,000 to support confidential counseling and other staff needs. Additionally, they presented a consolidated and updated HR manual, incorporating consistent terminology, recordkeeping, continuing education changes, and other feedback, describing it as a living document open to ongoing review and questions. On behalf of the Committee, Scott moved the adoption of the new HR manual. Motion carried (*Attachment G*).

Moderator's Report – 2025 Synod Moderator Sharon Curry reported to the Assembly. She reflected on their first year in the role, highlighting the collective accomplishments of the organization's 11 presbyteries, 22 commissioners, 700 congregations, and over 150,000 members. She provided an overview of the work done by commissions and committees, including initiatives like the Synod Youth Workshop and Commissioned Pastors Network. The moderator recognized key leaders, staff, and committee moderators for their dedication and noted upcoming events such as a retreat for commission pastors and small church leadership development. She encouraged participants to explore the Synod's website for more information and expressed gratitude for the collaborative efforts that sustain the organization, emphasizing the ongoing impact and future promise of their collective work (*Attachment H*).

Communication Services Plan – Thomas Riggs, Communication and Administration Coordinator, reported on the CSP Program. The Communications Services Program (CSP) partners with mid councils and Presbyterian programs across the denomination, offering website creation and maintenance, newsletters, and social media support—from Boise to St. Augustine and beyond. In addition to serving clients in states like Arizona, Kansas, Arkansas, and Louisiana, CSP is building new websites for several presbyteries and celebrating the creative ministry of Communications Contractor Lindsay Freeman-McCarthy. Through these partnerships, CSP helps share the stories of vibrant ministries addressing racial justice, anti-racism education, disaster preparedness, and social concerns like housing and food insecurity. From supporting presbytery mergers to amplifying local initiatives, the Synod of the Sun continues to strengthen Presbyterian witness through communication, collaboration, and storytelling (*Attachment I*).

Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report - In his Fall 2025 report to the Synod Assembly, Synod Leader and Stated Clerk Rev. Mitch Miller reflected on a year of transition, partnership, and

ministry across the Synod of the Sun. He expressed deep gratitude to Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell for her leadership of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR) as she moves to a national role with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Highlights of the year included the Synod Leadership Retreat at Mo-Ranch, the addition of NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children) as a new Covenant Partner—accompanied by Miller’s eye-opening visit to Romania—and ongoing engagement with presbyteries and partners across the region. He also reported on the Oklahoma presbyteries’ plans to explore merging Cimarron, Eastern Oklahoma, and Indian Nations presbyteries into one, requesting an exception to Book of Order provisions during this process. Having traveled extensively to attend presbytery meetings, retreats, and gatherings, Miller reaffirmed his commitment to presence, partnership, and strengthening ministry connections throughout the Synod (*Attachment J*).

Introduction of Libby Janes – Synod Leader Mitch Miller formally introduced Elizabeth “Libby” Janes as the new Director of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery.

Libby Janes is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with experience in hospital, counseling, and community social work. Libby earned a Master of Divinity degree at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, a Master of Social Work degree at Texas Tech University, and her Bachelor of Arts from Austin College, majoring in Religious Studies and History, and minoring in Anthropology and Non-Profit Organizations & Public Service. Libby is certified call-ready for ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Libby presently serves as a member of the PC(USA) Task Force to Explore Theology and Practice of Ordination.

Libby expressed a lifelong call to ministry and described pivotal social work experiences from her past work. In this new role as Director of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery, Libby expressed hope in building relationships, celebrating strengths, and exploring what’s possible. Libby offered prayer for the people in Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, and other Caribbean Islands presently being hit by Hurricane Melissa.

Empowering Committee – Moderator Lisa Almon reported on behalf of the committee. The Empowerment Committee’s Fall 2025 report celebrates how God is “doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19) through the ministries supported by the Synod of the Sun. Guided by the Synod’s mission, the committee awarded grants to border, youth, and Hispanic ministries that fostered growth, connection, and transformation across the region. The Tres Rios Border Foundation continued its advocacy and education work with migrants and will host the 2025 Fall Assembly in El Paso. The Synod Youth Workshop in Tulsa gathered 146 participants for worship, service, and healing after recent tragedies, supported by 57 scholarships that increased diversity and access. The Hispanic Ministries Mission Network held multiple workshops, expanded digital outreach, and is planning a regional gathering to reimagine Hispanic ministry within the PC(USA). The Network for Dismantling Racism produced new podcasts, continued vital

dialogue, and seeks to renew engagement through future events. Through these efforts, the committee witnesses God's ongoing renewal and empowerment across the Synod (*Attachment K*).

Grants and Scholarship Commission – Moderator Polly Williams reported on behalf of the committee. In 2025, the Synod of the Sun's Grants and Scholarships Committee distributed **\$104,196.25** in mission dollars to ministries and programs across ten presbyteries, supporting a wide range of efforts that embody faith in action. These included border and refugee outreach, youth and young adult programs, Hispanic and LGBTQ+ leadership development, humanitarian and homeless ministries, and higher education and seminary scholarships. Highlights included support for the Genesis Creative Collective in Austin, refugee aid through Clear Lake Presbyterian Church, youth scholarships for the Synod Youth Workshop and Intercultural Youth Conference, and compassionate outreach from New Orleans to Houston. Funds also strengthened international partnerships through mission trips and sustained covenant partners like NOROC and Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. Each grant reflected the Synod's shared commitment to serving God's people, fostering community, and nurturing new generations of faithful leaders (*Attachment L*).

Equipping Committee – Moderator Molly Casteel reported on behalf of the Committee. In 2025, the Equipping Committee focused on defining its mission and identifying key priorities for training and resource development across the Synod of the Sun. The committee invites participation from members throughout the synod and seeks input on educational and equipping opportunities, including required trainings such as boundary, sexual misconduct prevention, and anti-racism training, as well as sessions on cultural competencies, COM/CPM and PJC training, Synod standards for commissioned pastors and lay leaders, and the Communication Services Plan. Their goal is to discern how best to support and strengthen leaders and ministries through relevant, accessible, and collaborative learning opportunities (*Attachment M*).

Greetings from the Office of Stewardship and Funds Development – Lemuel García-Arroyo and Sarah McDowell brought greetings from the Office of Stewardship and Funds Development. Sarah introduced upcoming changes to the PC(USA) Special Offerings, effective January 1, 2026. The denomination will consolidate from four offerings to three, with no mission partners losing support. The Pentecost Offering will be retired, and its youth and young adult programs will move under the Christmas Joy Offering. The Peace and Global Witness Offering will be rebranded as the World Communion Offering. A major new feature will be an easy grant application process—replacing the small local retention funds—to provide minimum \$500

grants to congregations, presbyteries, or synods. Webinars and Q&A sessions will be offered in December to guide churches through the transition.

Greetings from PC(USA) Mid-Council Relations – Sallie Watson, Associate Director of Mid Council Relations for the PC(USA) Interim Unified Agency, brought greetings from the PC(USA) Mid-Council Relations office. She explained that the denomination is in the midst of a major restructuring, merging the former Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a single governing body—currently called the “Interim Unified Agency,” a placeholder name soon to be replaced. The new agency’s focus will center on supporting and strengthening mid councils rather than operating from a top-down model. Sally described her work connecting with presbytery and synod leaders, advising search committees, coordinating leadership gatherings, and preparing for the 227th General Assembly in Milwaukee next summer. She noted strong participation in upcoming events, including the Mid Council Leaders Gathering and the Moderators’ Conference, and encouraged presbyteries to submit commissioner names by December 24.

Connecting Committee – Moderator Polly Williams reported on behalf of the Connecting Committee. The Synod of the Sun Connections Committee has been actively engaging with and celebrating covenants with partners such as Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, Lyon College, the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest, Tres Rios Border Foundation, and Trinity University, with meetings held throughout 2025. Key ongoing considerations include ensuring covenant partners receive boundary training, maintaining strong historical and denominational ties, and keeping detailed records of covenant-specific responsibilities, including Synod representation on boards and management of scholarships. The committee is also exploring ways to uniquely connect with the denomination, such as sponsoring events like Stewardship Kaleidoscope in New Orleans (2025), a Presbyterian Professional Chaplains breakfast (2026), and approving space for Presbyterian Women gatherings. These efforts reflect a commitment to fostering meaningful, structured partnerships across the Synod (*Attachment N*).

Signing of Covenant Agreement and Covenant Partner Reports –

Lyon College – Maggie Alsup, chaplain at Lyon College and commissioner from Arkansas Presbyterian, shared updates on the college’s growth and initiatives since 2018. Highlights included the opening of the state’s first dental school with 80 students, the groundbreaking of a new veterinary school specializing in shelter animal care, the return of college football with a new on-campus stadium, and high student enrollment reaching near-capacity. The college also prioritized student well-being through programs like “Sabbath Scholars” for spiritual and mental health, a food pantry and snack program to address food insecurity, and the addition of

a therapy dog named Bear for pastoral care. Alsup emphasized Lyon College's commitment to hands-on learning, service, and community support, noting the diversity of the student body, including a significant population from Nepal, and the ongoing efforts to foster academic, spiritual, and emotional growth (*Attachment O*).

Presbyterian Pan American School – Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo, an alum and board member of Pan-American School, expressed gratitude for the ongoing support from the Presbyterian Church, highlighting the school's century-long mission of educating and preparing Christian leaders from diverse backgrounds. Pan-American School serves students from multiple countries, creating a vibrant, multicultural environment where students learn, worship, and grow together. Despite recent challenges such as declining enrollment after COVID and immigration policies, the school continues to provide high academic achievement and college readiness, supported by scholarships and partnerships. Lemuel invited continued engagement from the church community—as board members, faculty, or supporters—to help sustain and expand the school's mission, emphasizing its role as a home, a place of faith, and a platform for intercultural learning and leadership development (*Attachment P*).

Trinity University – Alex Serna-Wallender, chaplain at Trinity University, introduced the university and its president, Dr. Vanessa Beasley, highlighting their covenantal relationship with the Presbyterian Church since 1869. Dr. Beasley, the first female president of Trinity, shared accomplishments under her leadership since 2022, including the university's rise in national rankings, strong student success and employment outcomes, and a commitment to character-driven education. She emphasized Trinity's focus on developing leaders who could engage respectfully with diverse perspectives, citing programs like a semester-long "listening class" that taught students to listen with curiosity and compassion. Beasley also underscored the university's dedication to nurturing students' mind, body, and spirit, promoting both academic excellence and community engagement, and reaffirmed the importance of the longstanding covenantal partnership with the church in shaping the university's mission and values (*Attachment Q*).

Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest – Without a representative from PHSSW present, the signing of the Covenant Agreement will take place at a future Assembly (*Attachment R*).

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center – Joel Gill, Executive Director at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, described Ferncliff as a thriving hub of mission, ministry, and community impact. Once struggling with aging infrastructure and finances, Ferncliff gained independence as a 501(c)(3) and transformed into a center of healing, outreach, and service—hosting students affected by school shootings, supporting disaster relief through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and offering year-round mission opportunities. With programs like a nature

preschool, volunteer service projects, and a focus on outdoor learning and creation care, Ferncliff emphasizes the lasting impact of kindness, collaboration, and spiritual growth. Upcoming projects, such as stream restoration, reflect the camp's commitment to caring for creation while providing meaningful experiences on its expansive 12,200-acre campus (*Attachment S*).

Tres Rios Border Foundation – Members of the Foundation noted that during the previous day's activities, they had ample opportunity to share their mission to inspire, equip and connect Presbyterian congregations in the U.S.–Mexico border region (and beyond) to meaningful ministry, by responding to migration-related challenges with a focus on narrative change, systems change, and personal transformation (*Attachment T*).

Solar Under the Sun – Expressing gratitude for the support of the Synod and partners like Solar Under the Sun, Board Member Tom Ulrich highlighted how their collective efforts bring life-changing miracles around the world through solar-powered solutions. These initiatives provide children with light for studying, access to clean water, and medical care in previously underserved areas, demonstrating the transformative power of faith, compassion, and collaboration. Through vivid stories from Haiti and Ukraine, Tom illustrated how small acts of generosity—installing solar panels, sharing resources, and fostering cross-cultural partnerships—illuminate hope, inspire curiosity, and improve lives, showing that even modest contributions can create lasting impact and reflect God's love in tangible ways (*Attachment U*).

Installation of 2026 Moderator – In the space of closing worship, Commissioner Ron Fike was installed as the 2026 Moderator of Synod of the Sun. With the Assembly's business concluded in closing worship, Polly Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ron Fike. Motion carried.

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Attachment A

**SYNOD
OF THE SUN**

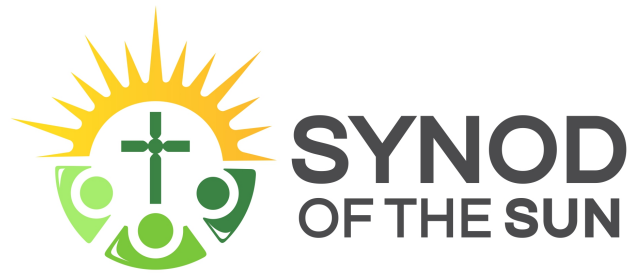
Commissioners Present

Princeton	Abaraoha	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Lisa	Almon	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Margaret	Alsup	Presbytery of Arkansas	Commissioner
Carlos	Baladez	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Jerry	Boles	Palo Duro Presbytery	Commissioner
Martha	Bumpas	Tres Rios Presbytery	Commissioner
Molly	Casteel	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Commissioner
Loretta	Credo	Presbytery of South Louisiana	Commissioner
Allen	Cross	Tres Rios Presbytery	Commissioner
Sharon	Curry	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Ben	Davidson	Palo Duro Presbytery	Commissioner
Ronald	Fike	Cimarron Presbytery	Commissioner
Todd	Freeman	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Commissioner
Dennis	Laughlin	Cimarron Presbytery	Commissioner
Leah	McFadden	Presbytery of New Covenant	Commissioner
Danita	Nelson	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Karen	Rogers	Presbytery of the Pines	Commissioner
Sandra	Watson	Presbytery of the Pines	Commissioner
Polly	Williams	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Edward	Wolf	Presbytery of New Covenant	Commissioner

Synod of the Sun

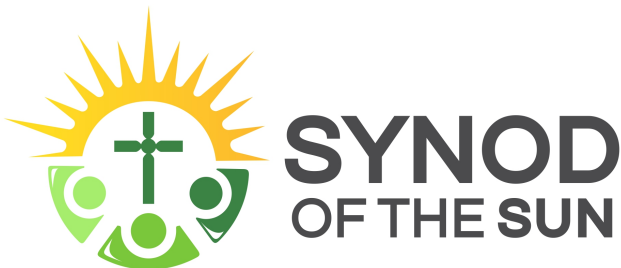
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Corresponding Members Present

Tim	Blodgett	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Scott	Campbell	Palo Duro Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Julia	Farrell	Presbytery of the Pines	Corresponding Member
Lemuel	Garcia-Arroyo	Mission Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Lynn	Hargrove	Presbytery of New Covenant	Corresponding Member
Christopher	Lee	Grace Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Matt	Miles	Tres Rios Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Jim	Poinsett	Presbytery of Arkansas	Corresponding Member
Charles	Smith	Indian Nations Presbytery	Corresponding Member
David	Stipp-Bethune	Presbytery of the Pines	Corresponding Member
Richard	Williams	Presbytery of South Louisiana	Corresponding Member



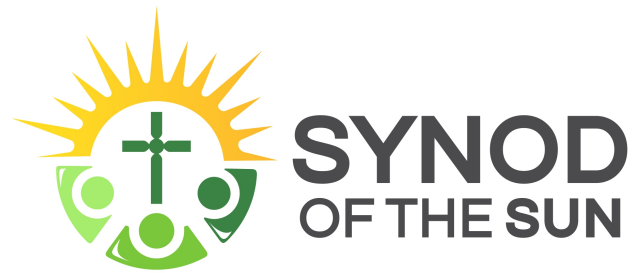
Requesting Excused Absence

Stacy Clopton	Palo Duro Presbytery	Commissioner
Wynona Bryant-Williams	Arkansas	Commissioner
Dzandria Chiphe	Presbytery of South Louisiana	Commissioner
Jim Freeman	Presbytery of the Pines	Commissioner
Janet Ruark	Indian Nations Presbytery	Commissioner
Diana Smith	Indian Nations Presbytery	Commissioner
David Watson	Presbytery of South Louisiana	Commissioner

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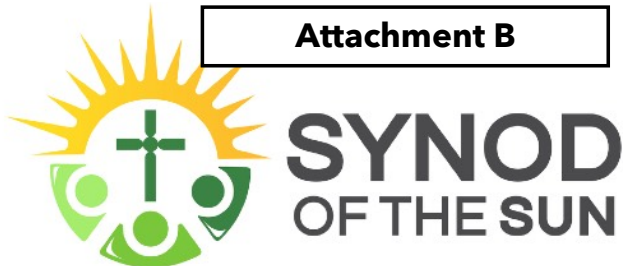


Other Persons Present

Margaret	Garver-Hamilton	Grace Presbytery	PW Moderator
Vanessa	Beasley	Other/None	Institution/Agency Representative
Joel	Gill	Presbytery of Arkansas	Institution/Agency Representative
Sarah	McDowell	Other/None	Institution/Agency Representative
Tom	Ulrich	Other/None	Institution/Agency Representative
Alex	Serna-Wallender	Mission Presbytery	Institution/Agency Representative
Sallie	Watson	Mission Presbytery	Institution/Agency Representative
Libby	Janes	Mission Presbytery	Synod Staff
Mitchell	Miller	Indian Nations Presbytery	Synod Staff
Thomas	Riggs	Other/None	Synod Staff
Tammy	Stepka	Grace Presbytery	Synod Staff
Bill	Wiles	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Synod Staff

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Event Schedule - Monday, October 27th

Abara House (1820 W. Paisano Dr.)

9:00 am	Arrival	
9:30 am	Opening Worship	
10:15-11:15 am	Tres Rios Border Foundation	Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero and John Nelsen
11:15am - 12:30pm	Abara	
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:30-2:30 pm	Project Vida	
2:30-3:30 pm	Stories from Immigration Court	
3:30-5:00 pm	Presbyterian Mission Partners Present	
5:00 pm	Dinner	
6:00 pm	Return to Hotel	

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Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, October 27th **FPC/ El Paso** (1340 Murchison Dr. Side Chapel)

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer

Synod Moderator, Sharon Curry

Declaration of Quorum

Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors

Adoption of Agenda

Acknowledgement of Land & People

Approval of Spring Stated Assembly Minutes

Finance Report

Bill Wiles, Synod Treasurer

Treasurer's Comments

2026 Proposed Budget

Explanation of Wednesday Community Options

Mitch Miller, Synod Leader and Stated Clerk

BREAK

REPORT: Human Resources Committee

Scott Campbell, Committee Moderator

Moderator Report

Sharon Curry

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Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, October 27th

FPC/ El Paso (1340 Murchison Dr. Side Chapel)

Committee Meetings

Lunch

REPORT: Communication Services Plan

Thomas Riggs, Communication and Administration Coordinator

REPORT: SPDR

REPORT: Synod Leader/Stated Clerk

Mitch Miller

REPORT: Empowering Committee

Carlos Baladez, Committee Moderator

REPORT: Grants & Scholarship Commission

Polly Williams, Commission Moderator

REPORT: Equipping Committee

Molly Casteel, Committee Moderator

Greetings from the Office of Stewardship and Funds Development

Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo

Greetings from PC(USA) Mid-Council Relations

Sallie Watson

REPORT: Connecting Committee

Polly Williams, Committee Moderator

BREAK

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Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, October 27th

FPC/ El Paso (1340 Murchison Dr. Side Chapel)

Covenant Partnerships and Renewals

Lyon College

Presbyterian Pan American School

Trinity University

Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center

Tres Rios Border Foundation

Presbyterian Mo Ranch Assembly

Solar Under the Sun

BREAK

Committee Meetings

Dinner

Worship

Communion and Installation of 2026
Moderator

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Event Schedule - Wednesday, October 29th

Abara House (1820 W. Paisano Dr.)

9:00 am - Noon Community Connection

Guided Walk to Juarez

Kelly Hunger Services

El Paso Holocaust Museum

Mexican American Cultural Center

Synod Stated Meeting
Presbyterian Mission Center | Irving, TX
February 24-February 25, 2025

Welcome & Introductions –Synod Moderator Sharon Curry called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m. CT, opening the meeting with prayer.

Acknowledgement of Land & People – Princeton Abaraoaha spoke of the Native American tribes that inhabited the land that is now Irving, Texas, offering a prayer of reconciliation and forgiveness.

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. 19 of 26 Commissioners were present (*Attachment A*).

Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors – Corresponding Members and Visitors were also acknowledged and seated. Polly Williams moved and Carlos Baladez seconded that the Corresponding Members and visitors be seated and given privileges of the floor. Motion carried (*Attachment A*).

Adoption of the Agenda – With the meeting agenda presented, Ben Davidson moved and Polly William seconded that the agenda be adopted. Motion carried (*Attachment B*).

Approval of Minutes – Moderator Curry presented the minutes from the previous Synod Assembly on November 5-6, 2024, for approval. With two grammatical errors offered, and without any further additions or corrections, approval of the minutes for the Stated Meeting were moved by Ron Fike and seconded by Ben Davidson. Motion carried (*Attachment C*).

Commissioner Orientation and Committee Meetings – Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller led the participants of the Assembly in a Commissioner Orientation. Following the presentation, the Assembly went into Committee Meetings.

Big Faith Resources – A presentation was made by Rev. Dr. Michelle Junkin, Pastor of Spiritual Formation and Director of Big Faith Resources at Westminster Presbyterian Church, OKC. Big Faith develops innovative resources that equip churches for an ever-changing neurodiverse landscape. They offer free sensory-friendly materials, training workshops, and shared traveling equipment, needed for inclusive worship experiences.

Signing of Covenant Agreement and Covenant Partner Reports –

Introduced by Scott Campbell, the Rev. Kristen Harris, Mission Co-Worker for NOROC, presented the mission and ministry of this ministry to Romania orphans and Ukrainian refugees. Kristen offered an overview of NOROC's 27-year history, highlighting its evolution from

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enrichment programming for Romanian children to educational assistance and therapy services, including their response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. She emphasized the importance of trained staff and the organization's adaptation to serve teenagers. Kristen also expressed gratitude for Presbyterian support and highlighted the partnership between Romanian Orthodox Christians and Presbyterian Christians globally.

Polly Williams moved and Jerry Boles seconded that Synod of the Sun and NOROC enter into a Covenant Agreement. Motion passed (*Attachment D*).

Laura Fleming from Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS) discussed the organization's mission and various programs aimed at supporting children and families in need, particularly those in the foster care system. She shared a heartwarming story of Jace and Jordan, two siblings who were adopted by their foster parents, and mentioned other programs such as the single parent family program in Waxahachie and the expansion of the family resource center in Meia. Laura expressed gratitude for the long-standing partnership between PCHAS and the attendees.

Ben Davidson moved and Ed Wolf seconded that the Synod and PCHAS continue their Covenant Agreement. Motion passed (*Attachment E*).

Bill Rutherford of Presbyterian Pan American School spoke to the Assembly. PPAS in Kingsville, Texas, founded in 1911, is a private charter secondary boarding school with an international student body facing challenges but experiencing success. The school currently has 53 students, with plans to increase enrollment, and relies on various funding sources to provide tuition assistance to 85% of its students. The school is preparing to compete in a statewide academic competition hosted by the Texas Association of Private Parochial Schools, where they hope to secure the top spot after placing third and second in previous years. The Assembly looks forward to renewing their relationship with Pan American School at the Fall Assembly.

Approval of 2025 Budget – Coordinating Team Moderator Ben Davidson and Treasurer Bill Wiles outlined the changes from the Preliminary Budget approved at the Fall 2024 Assembly. Bill took the Assembly through the budget with a new format. Bill discussed the budget categories for their organization, including unrestricted funds, donor restricted funds, and Synod designated funds, and the financial situation of the organization. He also introduced the financial coaching program offered by the Presbyterian Foundation and offered to provide further support and guidance. Lastly, he discussed the Senate's budget for 2025, emphasizing the importance of investing in people and programs, and the need for increased investment. Carlos Baladez moved and Ben Davidson seconded that the budget be approved. Motion passed (*Attachment F*).

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Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report – Synod Leader Mitch Miller reported to the Assembly. Mitch pointed the Assembly to his report for information. Questions regarding the Synod Leader’s Discretionary Fund were raised and will be investigated (*Attachment G*).

Commissions/Entities

Synod Partnership for Disaster Response – Kathy Lee-Cornell, Director of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Response, reported on SPDR. Kathy told the Assembly about the sheer number of disasters that have occurred within the bounds of the Synod, numbering 1 in 3 that have happened in 2024. She talked about the funds raised from grants and donations, detailing the work that has been completed.

Richard Williams reported that the initial group that created SPDR as a pilot program and affirmed that SPDR will move to a more permanent program. The group also dreamed about how the program will grow in the next five years.

A motion was made to enter an Addendum to the Covenant Agreement of the Synod of the Sun SPDR to extend the term an additional five years commencing on January 1, 2026. Molly Casteel moved and Princeton Abaraoha seconded. Motion carried (*Attachment H*).

Communication Services Plan – Thomas Riggs, Communication and Administration Coordinator, reported on the CSP Program. Thomas reported on the history of the program, growing from its inception with Mission Presbytery as the first partner in 2018 to now having 26 partners across the PC(USA). The program generates between 8 to 12 newsletters a week, 120+ social media posts a week, and produces a new website about once a month. The projected income from the program for 2025 is just under \$80k (*Attachment I*).

Empowering Committee Report – Committee Moderator Carlos Baladez invited Leah McFadden reported on behalf of the Committee, highlighting the work of Synod Youth Workshop. A video was presented and Emma Rigler, a youth who attended and now an adult who volunteers, told of her own SYW experience.

After leading the Assembly in “Yes, I’m a Pixel”, Carlos reported on the work HMMN, encouraging the Assembly to listen to the Synod podcast. He also told the community that the education program created by HMMN will be translated and used locally for other immigrant communities.

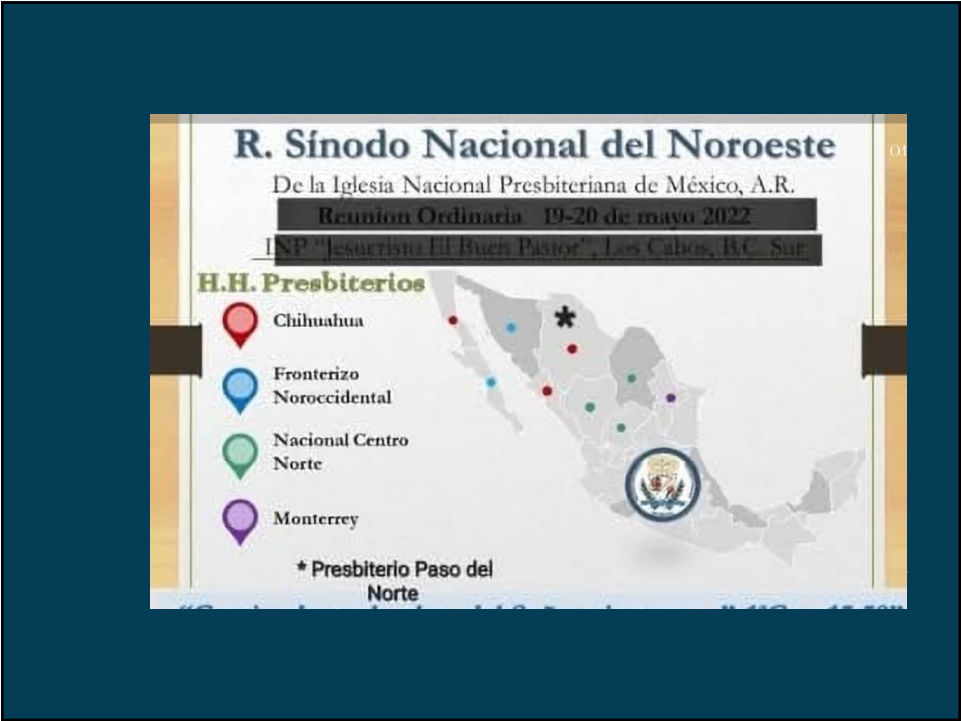
Empowering Committee is working to collaborate with our Border Ministries to see how we can work more efficiently and joyfully in empowering each other (*Attachment J*).

Connecting Committee + Grants and Scholarship Commission Reports – Committee and Commission Moderator Polly Williams reported to the Assembly. Polly requested for help in managing the Connecting Committee and Grants and Scholarships, which had faced challenges in

2025 Spring Stated Meeting Minutes

2024. She emphasized the need for assistance in addressing these issues and encouraged the team to reach out to her for any questions or concerns. Polly also mentioned the importance of learning how to navigate the Grants and Scholarships page on the Synod website and the need for collaboration to achieve their goals in 2025 (*Attachments K & L*).

With the Assembly's business concluded in closing worship, led by Vice Moderator Ronald Fike, Todd Freeman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Molly Casteel. Motion carried.



1



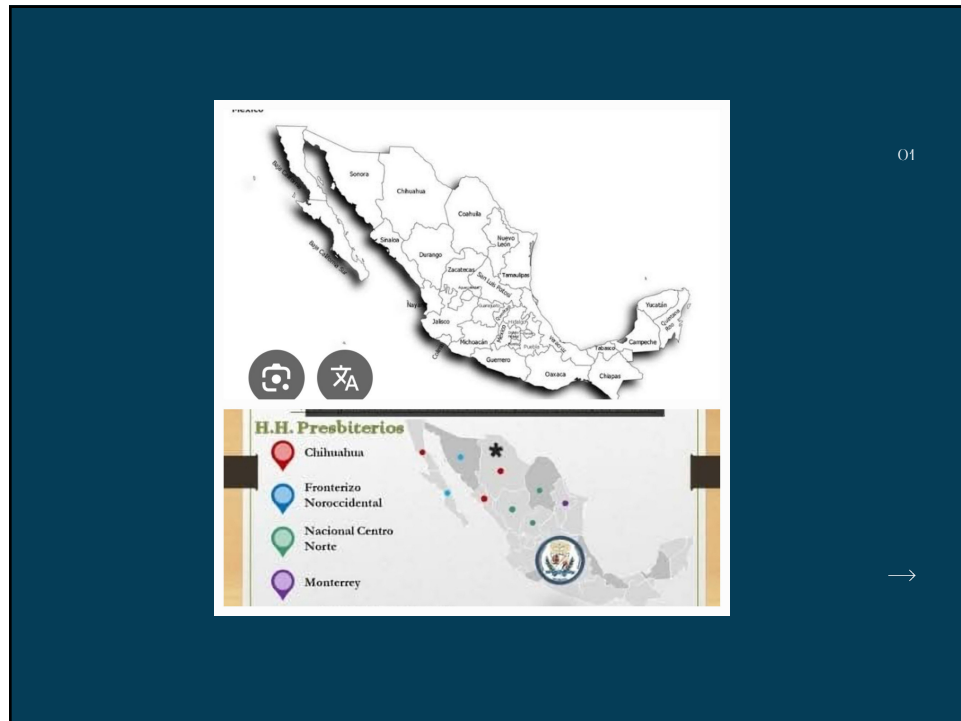
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3



4



**Presidente
Pastor Felipe Barandiarán**



7



**Presidente Pbro. Felipe Barandiarán.
Vice P. Pbro. Sergio Morles.
Secretario Pbro. Ramón García.
Tesorero Pbro. David Gutiérrez.
Vocal D. Pbro. Ananias Bravo de León**

8

Our Mission

05

Servir a los presbiterios con amor fraternal, fortaleciendo su labor a través de los ministerios de Evangelismo, Educación, Relaciones y Recursos, orando por sus necesidades, apoyando sus planes y proveyendo herramientas que impulsen el crecimiento integral de la Iglesia de Cristo.

→

9

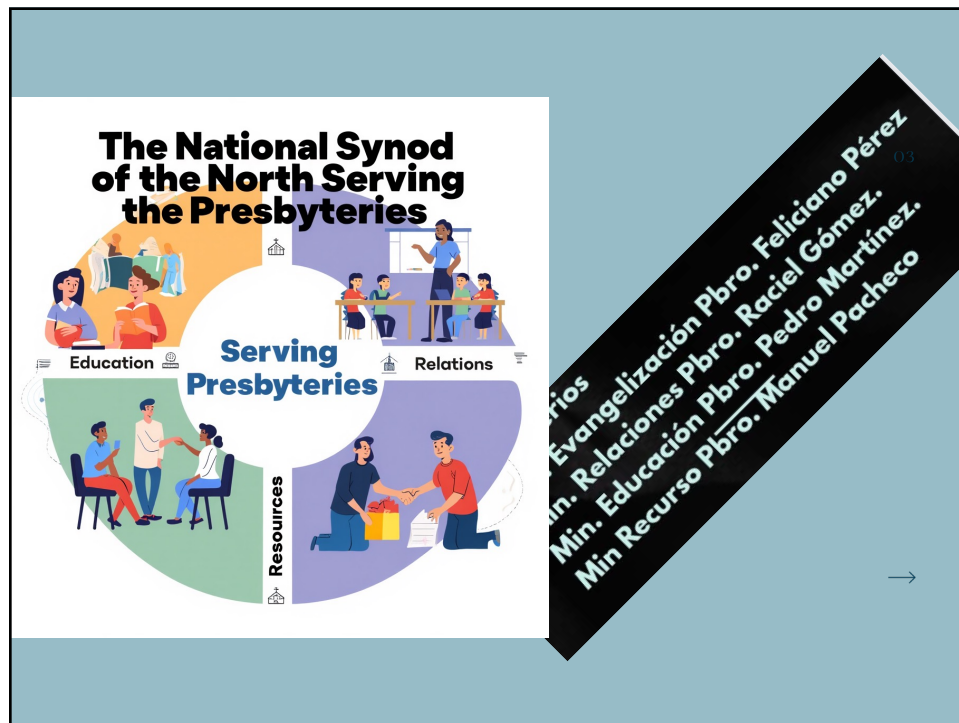
Our Mission

05

 **Mission To serve the presbyteries with brotherly love, strengthening their work through the ministries of Evangelism, Education, Relationships, and Resources, praying for their needs, supporting their plans, and providing tools that**

→

10



11

Our Vision

05

To be a united and supportive Synod that promotes cooperation among the country's presbyteries and reestablishes the bonds of communion with our brothers and sisters in the Synod and the presbyteries on the border, building together a network of mutual support for the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

12

Our Vision

05



13

Our Vision

05

Ser un Sínodo unido y solidario, que promueva la cooperación entre los presbiterios del país y restablezca los lazos de comunión con nuestros hermanos del Sínodo y de los presbiterios de la frontera, edificando juntos una red de apoyo mutuo para la expansión del Reino de Dios. →

14



**As a Synod, we will
host the next meeting
of the General
Assembly in August
2026.**

*Prebiterio Fronterizo
Noroccidental*

Synod of the Sun 2026 Budget Notes

An Overview of the Synod's Accounting Structure

The first step in diving into the 2026 budget of the Synod of the Sun ("Synod") is to understand that the accounting and reporting standards for churches and other non-profit organizations are different from those used in the for-profit business world. Those differences are driven by the fact that most non-profits depend upon distributions from their investment funds in order to sustain their operations.

The guidelines of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants require the assets and incomes of non-profit organizations (like the Synod and its presbyteries and churches) be segregated into two classifications:

- **Unrestricted Assets or Funds:**

Unrestricted Funds are the assets and incomes which have no restrictions on their use. The 2026 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's unrestricted assets are shown in the green highlighted area on page 6 and the detailed expense schedules on pages 7 and 8.

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- **Funds the Synod has set-aside for designated uses:**

These are financial funds which the Synod has designated for specific uses. These Synod Designated Funds can be redesignated for different uses from time-to-time by the Synod or they can be reclassified as Unrestricted Funds. The 2026 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's Designated Funds are shown in the orange highlighted area on page 6 and the details shown on page 10.

- **Funds restricted by the donor of the funds:**

These are financial funds held by the Synod which were received from donors who attached restrictions to these funds. Those restrictions can be for the use of the fund, the income it generates, or time restrictions on when the funds can be used. Generally, such restrictions can be modified only by the donor or, under certain circumstances, actions taken by a court-of-law. Grants are generally considered to be donor-restricted funds.

Additionally, the periodic distribution of funds which the Synod receives from endowment funds are also considered donor-restricted funds which must be used for the purposes set forth by the donor.

The 2026 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's Donor Restricted Funds are shown in the orange highlighted area on page 6 and the details shown on page 10. Disbursements of these funds are usually handled by the Synod's Grants and Scholarships Commission.

The AICPA also sets forth guidelines that require the receipts and disbursements associated with each of these three funds be tracked separately. This requirement for "fund accounting" is the second major difference from the accounting practices followed by business organizations. This is why the budget summary on page 6 is composed of three separate sections (Unrestricted, Synod Designated, and Donor Restricted).

The third major difference is the format of the required financial statements. A for-profit organization's financial reports include:

- A Balance Sheet---showing the assets, liabilities, and the capital structure (stock and retained earnings) of a company at a specific date.

The Statement of Financial Position is very similar to the for-profit Balance Sheet except that there are no "owners" of a non-profit organization. Therefore, there is not a capital stock plus retained earnings section. In its place are "net fund balances" which show how much of the Synod's assets can be used for unrestricted purposes and how much are tied-up with restrictions. A projected 2026 Statement of Financial Position is not included in this budget packet.

- An Income Statement (also called a Statement of Revenues and Expenses)--showing the income, expenses, and net income or loss of a company over a specified period of time, usually one year.

The Statement of Activities segregates the Synod's receipts and disbursements into the specific asset classification in which the transaction occurred. This approach shows (1) the extent to which the Synod is balancing the receipts and expenditures derived from its funds as well as (2) the net value of those funds which are available for the organization's use.

The Statement of Activities also shows transactions which are internal transfers of assets to support mission activities, e.g., taking funds from an investment account for use in supporting a ministry program. Please see the blue highlighted area on page 6 and the details on page 9.

Specific Changes Included in the 2026 Projected Budget

The proposed 2026 budget for the Synod of the Sun shows a total projected income of \$157,949 including allowances for distributions by the Grants and Scholarships Commission. This is the budget you are being asked to review and approve.

The changes proposed in the 2026 Synod budget vs. the 2025 Synod budget are highlighted in red. This detailed information is being provided to you now so we can stream-line the budget presentation process while being fully transparent in our presentations. If you have questions, please bring them to our Fall Assembly or contact me directly. Below is a summary of the proposed changes.

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- The blue highlighted amounts are those still being discussed with the Synod of the Sun's Foundation.
- Communication Services income was reduced to a more realistic number

- The Coordinating Team authorized keeping these previously distributed investment earnings in the investment funds. In 2025 these distributions totaled \$14,026, so this action decreased projected 2026 operating incomes (but the forgone income stays in the investment funds).
- See the notes on pages 2 and 3 regarding individual operating expense changes.

Page 7

- The Connecting Committee has not settled on their proposed activities for 2026. An unallocated budget line item of \$5,500 is included for 2026. The total for this Committee (\$9,500 is the same as in 2025).
- The line item for the GA Hospitality Suite is an accrual expense. We are beginning the practice of accruing (or setting aside) annual budgets so we can pay the costs of the General Assembly and the Youth Triennium in the years these events occur without having to "stretch" our annual budgets.
- The Equipping Committee has the responsibility to plan and host a proposed Synod School in 2026. We do not know what the projected costs of this Synod School will be. We are budgeting \$12,500 for 2026 plus the use of \$10,000 in carried-over 2025 Synod School funds (a total of \$22,500).
- The line item for the Hispanic Mission Ministries Network has been increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000 reflecting their increased activities.
- The line item for the Synod Youth Workshop has been increased from \$5,000 to \$7,500 reflecting additional costs charged by the University of Tusa.

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- The Synod HR Committee voted to increase the Synod Leader's Discretionary Fund from \$10,000 in 2025 to \$20,000 for 2026. To date the Synod Leader has only used \$605 of these funds in 2025.
- The HR Committee is recommending 2.8% COLA raises for staff totaling \$6,532 for 2026. An allowance of \$9,000 has also been added to reflect the anticipated additional costs from the Board of Pensions, Mitch Miller's SECA offset, and payroll taxes associated with these recommended salary increases.
- The combined line items for the Fall and Spring Assemblies plus the Leadership Gathering have been reallocated to better reflect actual costs.
- The General Assembly line item is one of the three accrual accounts (GA, GA Hospitality, and Youth Triennium) we have set up this year for future year costs.
- The line item for Bookkeeping Services is being reduced to reflect our efforts to streamline our account processes and shift more from the accounting firm to our Synod staff.
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- The monthly fees charged by our APLOS accounting software were not included in the 2025 budget. We have corrected that oversight.
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- There are mandated rate changes by the Board of Pensions. These additional costs are shown in the compensation lines for Mitch Miller and Thomas Riggs.

- The allowance for HR Committee costs has been reduced from \$2,000 in 2025 to \$1,000 in 2026.

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- We are projecting that our investment funds will increase by 8% in 2026 including both the income they generate and their increase share value.
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- The Gatewood accounts represented unrestricted funds held for general operations or missional expenses. There are two Gatewood Fund accounts. One account is an investment fund administered by the Texas Presbyterian Foundation. The other Gatewood account represents cash held by the Synod. The proposed 2026 Synod budget draws funds from the Gatewood cash balances.
- The first proposed Gatewood withdrawal is a \$4,000 accrual being set aside for the next Youth Triennium to be held in 2028.
- The second proposed use of the Gatewood funds is an allocation of up to \$19,000 in partial scholarships for the 2026 Synod Youth Workshop to be held at the University of Tulsa. The SYW leadership team is proposing to specifically reach out to students at the PanAmerican school in 2026. In 2025, the SYW used \$13,180 of their allowed \$15,000 in scholarship funds.
- The third proposed use of Gatewood funds to support the work of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery. The Spring Assembly voted to match additional annual contributions to SPDR by our Presbyteries when such contributions exceed their 2021-2025 base amounts. The budget allocation for these matching funds was approved at \$20,000 per year.
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This page provides a pie-chart presentation of the uses the Synod of the Sun's proposed 2026 budget by operating category.

Synod Missions and Ministries

Friends, budget dollars are just numbers, and they can quickly become mind-numbing. What is most important is what are we doing with these dollars. Below are some highlights for you to consider how your Synod is working for God's Kingdom.

- **A fundamental reason for the existence of the Synod of the Sun is to organize and carry-out the mission and ministry work we can do together that the individual presbyteries could not do on their own.**

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 - Working allowance for a new Synod School \$ 22,500
 - Gatherings of leadership from all 11 presbyteries \$ 24,000
 - Travel between presbyteries and their meetings \$ 32,000
 - Projected Scholarships and Grants \$ 75,000
- | | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| Total | <u>\$418,500</u> |
|-------|-------------------------|

**Yes, we can make a real difference
when we pool our funds and work together!**

SYNOD OF THE SUN

Proposed 2026 Budget Packet

Prepared by: William M. (Bill) Wiles
Treasurer, Synod of the Sun
10.12.2025

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|-------|-------------------------|

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Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.
Proposed 2026 Budgets

2026 Change

-----6.30.2025-----				-----Proposed 2026 Budget-----		
	UnRestricted	Restricted	2025	UnRestricted	Restricted	
	Funds	Funds	Totals	Funds	Funds	Totals
UnRestricted Incomes						
40001 Previous year roll-over funds			0	50,000		50,000
Presbytery Contributions	49,555		49,555	85,000		85,000
42110 Unrestricted Mission Support (SOSFD)	151,125		151,125	258,000		258,000
42110 Administration Support (SOSFD)			0	88,000		88,000
42100 Contributions	33		33			0
42150 Special Contributions--Mission Presbytery			0	0		0
42210 PILP Interest Earned	1,276		1,276	3,500		3,500
NCTC accrual	5,722		5,722	25,000		25,000
43100 Communication Services	63,804		63,804	70,000		70,000
Gatewood Fund Distributions			0	0	1 see investments	0
Ministry Reserve Distributions			0	0	1 see investments	0
Year-End Reserves Distributions			0	0	1 see investments	0
Total Revenues	271,515	0	271,515	565,026	579,500	579,500
UnRestricted Expenses (See Detailed Expenses)						
61000 Connecting Expenditures	0		0	9,500		9,500
62001 Equipping	7,445		7,445	28,400		28,400
63000 Empowering	11,643		11,643	26,000		30,500
64001 Coordinating Team	61,917		61,917	100,750		121,250
65000 Personnel	130,826		130,826	363,000		384,299
66001 Grants and Scholarships (#61040)	11,257		11,257	25,000		25,000
66002 Representation	0		0	1,000		1,000
66003 Permanent Judicial Commission	0		0	2,000		1,000
90200 Depreciation	0		0			
Total Expenses	223,088	0	223,088	555,650	600,949	600,949
OPERATIONAL FUNDS INCOMES	48,427	0	48,427	9,376	(21,449)	(21,449)
Transactions in Restricted/Unrestricted Cash Funds						
Unrestricted Cash Funds						
Projected Unrestricted Funds Income				0		0
Projected Use of Unrestricted Funds				(24,000)		(24,000)
Restricted Funds Incomes						
Projected Synod-Designated Funds Income					0	0
Projected Use of Synod-Designated Funds					0	0
Synod SPDR Match with Presbyteries					(20,000)	(20,000)
Projected Donor-Restricted Funds Income					86,290	86,290
Projected Use of Donor-Restricted Funds					(50,000)	(50,000)
Reserve Funds Income/Uses				(24,000)	16,290	(7,710)
Projected Changes in TPF Investment Funds						
Projected Increases in Value				67,369	170,739	238,108
Projected Uses of Investment Funds				0	(51,000)	(51,000)
New Additions to Investment Funds				0	0	0
Net Change in Value of Investments				67,369	119,739	187,108
Net Income Including Investments				21,920	136,029	157,949

1 Income left in funds
w/h/b \$14,026

6

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

Administration & Operations		6.30.2025				-----Proposed 2026 Budget-----		
		UnRestricted	Restricted	Totals	2025	UnRestricted	Restricted	Totals
Connecting Expenditures		Funds	Funds		Budget	Funds	Funds	
61080	Presbyterian Women	0		0	500	0		0
61100	Covenant Relationship Travel	0		0	2,000	0		0
61110	Lyon College	0		0	100	0		0
61120	Austin College	0		0	100	0		0
61130	University of Ozarks	0		0	100	0		0
61140	Schreiner University	0		0	100	0		0
61150	Trinity University	0		0	100	0		0
61160	Tulsa University	0		0	100	0		0
61170	PanAmerican School	0		0	100	0		0
61180	Austin Seminary	0		0	100	0		0
61190	Presby Children's Home & Service	0		0	100	0		0
61200	Evergreen Presby. Ministries	0		0	100	0		0
61210	Vera Loyd Home & Family	0		0	100	0		0
61220	Goodland Academy	0		0	100	0		0
61230	Mo Ranch	0		0	100	0		0
61240	Presby. Historical Society of SW	0		0	100	0		0
61250	Texas Presbyterian Foundation	0		0	100	0		0
61260	Multi-Cultural Youth Conf.	0		0	3,500	3,500		3,500
61302	Connecting Initiatives	0		0	1,000	0		0
61310	Critical Needs Fund	0		0	0	0		0
61330	GA Hospitality Suite (Accrual)	0		0	1,000	500		500
Budgeted but Unallocated						5,500		5,500
Totals		0	0	0	9,500	9,500	0	9,500
Equipping Expenditures								
61030	COM Event	0		0	0	0		0
61035	Development Courses	0		0	0	0		0
61060	Sexual Misconduct Training	(29)		(29)	3,000	3,000		3,000
61070	EP Forum	1,247		1,247	10,000	10,000		10,000
61270	Synod School	0		0	12,500	22,500		12,500
	Carryover from 2025					(10,000)		12,500
61280	Clerk Forum	2,759		7,431	0	0		0
62030	CSP Operations (PT)	5,289		5,289	0	0		0
62060	Synod Marketing Materials	0		0	2,400	2,400		2,400
64160	Racial Ethnic Ministries	0		0	500	500		500
Totals		9,266	0	13,938	28,400	28,400	0	28,400
Empowering Expenditures								
61050	Network Nurture	0		0	5,000	5,000		5,000
61055	Hispanic Mission Ministries Network	0		0	3,000	5,000		5,000
61065	Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today			0	10,000	10,000		10,000
	(additional funding from reserves)							0
	IMAGINE Event	0		0	0	0		0
63100	SPDR Extra Support	0		0	3,000	3,000		3,000
	(additional funding from reserves)							0
61270	Synod Youth Workshop	10,000		10,000	5,000	7,500		7,500
Totals		10,000	0	10,000	26,000	30,500	0	30,500

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

Administration & Operations		6.30.2025				Proposed 2026 Budget		
Coordinating Team		UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals	2025 Budget	UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals
61340	Moderator Expenses	640		640	1,000	1,000		1,000
62040	Computer Hardware	990		990	500	500		500
62050	Online Operations	2,433		2,433	5,000	5,000		5,000
62055	Online Processing Fees	342		342	250	250		250
62057	Synod Leader Discretionary Fund	605		605	10,000	20,000		20,000
64010	Stated Meeting, Fall			0	22,000	22,000		22,000
64020	Stated Meeting, Spring	13,992		13,992	7,000	15,000		15,000
64030	Leadership Gathering	2,361		2,361	10,000	5,000		5,000
64040	General Assembly (Accrual)				3,000	4,000		4,000
64050	Administrative Commission			0	1,000	1,000		1,000
64100	Other Committee Expenses			0	1,000	500		500
66000	Office Expenses			0	0	0		0
66010	Office Rent			0	0	0		0
66020	Telephone			0	0	0		0
66030	Postage	58		58	1,000	500		500
66040	Copiers			0	0	0		0
66050	Supplies	542		542	1,000	1,000		1,000
66060	File Retention/Storage	0		0	1,000	1,000		1,000
66070	Bookkeeping Services	27,287		27,287	25,000	22,500		22,000
66071	Audit Fees			0	8,000	12,000		12,000
66090	Insurance	3,173		3,173	1,000	7,000		7,000
66100	Bank Charges	280		280	2,000	1,000		1,000
66105	APLOS Fees	1,826		1,826	0	2,000		2,000
66110	Miscellaneous Charges			0		500		500
66120	Contingency			0	1,000			0
Totals		54,529	0	54,529	100,750	121,750	0	121,250
Personnel Expenditures								
65010	Synod Leader/SC Salary & House	51,500		51,500	108,150	111,178		111,178
65020	Synod Leader/SC BOP	15,467		15,467	40,200	40,200	*	40,200
65030	Synod Leader/SECA Offset	3,543		3,543	6,200	6,200	*	6,200
65040	Synod Leader/SC Prof Expenses	0		0	1,500	1,500		1,500
65050	Synod Leader/SC Prof Development	1,520		1,520	2,500	2,500		2,500
65510	Synod Leader/SC Travel	21,559		16,887	24,500	32,000		32,000
Synod Leader Totals		93,589	0	88,917	183,050	193,578	0	193,578
65110	Comm & Admin Coordinator Salary	32,392		32,392	63,118	64,885		64,885
65120	Comm & Admin Coordinator BOP	6,497		6,497	18,100	18,100	*	18,100
65130	Comm & Admin Coord. Payroll Taxes	2,312		2,312	4,500	4,500	*	4,500
65140	Comm & Admin Coordinator Prof Dev.	0		0	1,500	1,500		1,500
65520	Comm & Admin Coordinator Travel	826		826	2,500	2,500		2,500
Comm & Admin Totals		42,027	0	42,027	89,718	91,485	0	91,485
65170	Treasurer Salary	17,333		17,333	38,000	39,064		39,064
65180	Treasurer Payroll Taxes	1,326		1,326	3,000	3,000	*	3,000
	Treasurer Prof Expenses	0		0	2,000	2,000		2,000
	Treasurer Travel	0		0	2,000	2,000		2,000
Treasurer Totals		18,659	0	18,659	45,000	46,064	0	46,064
	Administrative Assistant Salary	9,600		9,600	24,000	24,672		24,672
	AA Payroll Taxes	734		734	3,500	3,500	*	3,500
Administrative Assistant Totals		10,334	0	10,334	27,500	28,172	0	28,172
65220	CSP Contract Staff	7,855		7,855	15,000	15,000		15,000
65410	HR Committee	0		0	2,000	1,000		1,000
	BOP, SECA Offset, Payroll Taxes					9,000	*	9,000
Personnel Totals		172,464	0	167,792	362,268	384,299		384,299

Budget 2026 TPF Projections

codes	Unrestricted Investment Funds	Balance @ 6.30.25	Projected Increase @ 4%	Projected Value @ 12.31.25	Projected 2026 Growth @ 8%	Projected Withdrawals For Budget Year 2026 Fund Use	Amount	Projected Value @ 12.31.26
	Gateway Account	686,123	27,445	713,568	57,085		0	770,653
	Ministry Reserves	64,035	2,561	66,596	5,328		0	71,924
	Year-End Reserves	59,562	2,382	61,944	4,956		0	66,900
					67,369			909,478
	<u>Synod Designated Investment Funds</u>							
	Disaster Assistance Fund	15,574	623	16,197	1,296		0	17,493
	Synod Regional PDA	134,940	5,398	140,338	11,227	1 SPDR Support	20,000	131,565
	Hispanic American Ministries--MAPPA	86,358	3,454	89,812	7,185	Raising Leaders	19,000	77,997
	Hispanic American Ministries--MAAC	44,384	1,775	46,159	3,693			49,852
	<u>Donor Restricted Investment Funds</u>							
	Albert Crisp Scholarship Fund	134,988	5,400	140,388	11,231	Children/Youth	7,000	144,619
	Albert Crisp Endowment Fund	110,498	4,420	114,918	9,193	Children/Youth	5,000	119,111
	Munson & Kerr Fund	1,525,414	61,017	1,586,431	126,914			1,713,345
		2,861,876	114,475	2,976,351	238,108		51,000	2,253,982

1 The Synod is obligated to match up to \$20,000 in new presbytery SPDR contributions.

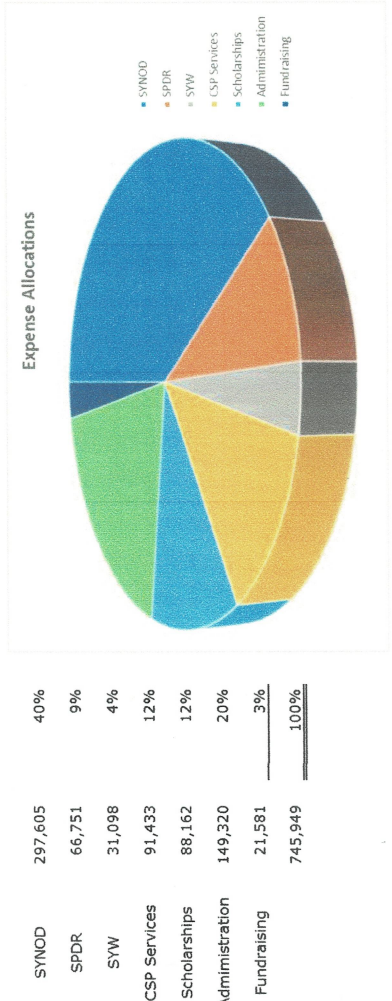
Reserve Funds Incomes

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

		Available Balance at 9.30.25	Projected TPF Income	Projected PF Income	Projected Fund Use	Projected Amount	Balance 12.31.26
Unrestricted Funds							
31100	Gatewood Fund Balance	144,440	see investments		Triennium accrual	(4,000)	120,440
					SYW Scholarships	(19,000)	
					Possible SPDR Match	(20,000)	
31110	Ministry Reserve Balance	4,935	see investments				4,935
31120	Year-end Reserves	4,591	see investments				4,591
	PILP CD	100,000	stmt activities				100,000
		253,966	0	0		(43,000)	229,966
Synod Designated							
30121	Prof Dev--Riggs	5,072					5,072
31130	Disaster Assistance Fund	357					357
31140	Translation Fund	29,726			Korean/Hispanic	(1,000)	28,726
31150	Future Church	0					0
31180	Special Meetings	17,862					17,862
31190	Synod Leadership Travel	5,512					5,512
31220	COR Network	471					471
31222	CP Network	15,121					15,121
31250	Promotional Swag	1,957					1,957
31260	Network Reserves	30,121					30,121
31280	Presbytery Leader Formation	14,234					14,234
31300	International Mission Trips	800					800
31310	Mission Network Grants	0					0
32130	Opiod Crisis	500					500
32140	Network 4 Dismantly Racism	0					0
32150	Regional PDA	0					0
32155	ESL Scholarships	25,000					25,000
	Totals	146,733	0	0		(1,000)	145,733
Donor Restricted							
33130	David Robinson Fund--PF	1,744		900			2,644
33140	Seminary Scholarship	9,759	654				10,413
33150	Young Adult Volunteers	55,715	5,127				60,842
33160	Education Programs	290	513				803
33170	Peacemaking	2,865					2,865
33187	Aid for Pastors	11,758	3,449				15,207
33188	Church Extension	25,800	7,730				33,530
33189	National Missions in Texas	39,595	7,715				47,310
33200	Old Age Concerns	147,548	23,011				170,559
33210	Reserve for Higher Education	80,979	18,794				99,773
33220	Child & Youth Schroeder	0	1,950				1,950
	Child & Youth Schroeder--PF	0		242			242
33240	Viola Williams	545		12			557
33900	SOPF scholarship	13,000	16,193				29,193
	Totals	389,598	85,136	1,154		0	475,888
	Totals	790,297	85,136	1,154		(44,000)	851,587

Synod of the Sun
Projected 2026 Statement of Functional Expenses

Staff Costs:	PROGRAMMING									
	Grants & Scholarships				Administration			Fundraising		
	SYNOD	SPDR	SYW	CSP Services	Scholarships	Administration	Fundraising	Totals		
Synod of Sun	131,676	20,258	2,026	6,077	10,129	22,284	10,129	202,578		
Mitch Miller	65%	10%	1%	3%	5%	11%	5%	100%		
Thomas Riggs	1,830	1,830	1,830	68,614	1,830	6,404	9,149	91,485		
	2%	2%	2%	75%	2%	7%	10%	183%		
Bill Wiles	1,382	1,382	461	461	921	39,154	2,303	46,064		
	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	85%	5%	110%		
Tammy Stepka	2,817	282	282	282	282	24,228	0%	28,172		
	10%	1%	1%	1%	1%	86%		114%		
Contract Staff Expense				16,000				16,000		
Total Personnel	137,705	23,751	4,598	91,433	13,162	92,070	21,581	384,299		
Expenses:										
Connecting Expenses	9,500				9,500			9,500		
Equipping Expenses	28,400				28,400			28,400		
Empowering Expenses					0			0		
Network Nurture	5,000				5,000			5,000		
Hispanic Ministries	15,000				15,000			15,000		
SPDR Support		3,000			3,000			3,000		
SYW Support			7,500		7,500			7,500		
Coordinating Team										
General Administration										
SL Discretionary Fund	20,000				20,000			20,000		
Fall Stated Meeting	22,000				22,000			22,000		
Spring Stated Meeting	15,000				15,000			15,000		
Leadership Gathering	5,000				5,000			5,000		
General Assembly	4,000				4,000			4,000		
Other										
Reserve Funds										
Triennium accrual	4,000				4,000			4,000		
SPDR match		20,000			20,000			20,000		
SYW scholarships			19,000		19,000			19,000		
Translation Services	1,000				1,000			1,000		
General scholarships					25,000			25,000		
Projected reserves use					50,000			50,000		
Projected investment use	31,000	20,000			51,000			51,000		
Totals for SOTS	297,605	66,751	31,098	91,433	88,162	149,320	21,581	745,949		
	40%	9%	4%	12%	12%	20%	3%	100%		
SYNOD	297,605									
SPDR		66,751								
SYW			31,098							
CSP Services				91,433						
Scholarships					88,162					
Administration						149,320				
Fundraising							21,581			



HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**SYNOD OF THE SUN****HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE****I. Overview**

The Synod of the Sun (known also as “Synod”) is committed to the full use of the human potential of its staff through an open-partnership style of shared rights, responsibilities, and accountability. The human resources policies of the synod are established by the synod and administered by the human resources committee. The Human Resources Committee shall be responsible for the review and oversight of Synod staff, development, compensation, and maintenance of Human Resources Policies and management of the hiring process.

All members of the Human Resources Committee, including the Chair, shall be elected by the Assembly and will include one (1) person optimally from each of the three (3) standing committees with HR experience if possible, one (1) member of the EP Forum (rotates annually), and at least two (2) at-large members who are ruling or teaching elder members of presbyteries within the Synod. At-large elders who come with HR field experience may be the ideal asset.

Terms shall be staggered three (3) years and may be renewable once, for an aggregate of no more than six (6) continuous years. The Human Resources Committee Chair serves on the Synod’s Coordinating Team. The Synod Moderator and Head of Staff serves as Ex Officio with voice but not vote.

One member of each Mission Network employing staff, with HR experience, if possible, shall serve Ex Officio with voice but without vote. In calendar year 2026, no formal networks with staff exist.

The Human Resources Committee will conduct its business with the following understandings and philosophy:

- A. The committee will work in cooperation with the synod staff.
- B. All committee members will respect confidentiality of information.
- C. The committee will become informed from the synod staff as to:
 - 1. work loads
 - 2. staffing assignments
 - 3. work effectiveness
 - 4. financial health of the Synod
- D. It is the responsibility of the committee to write job descriptions and human resources policies for approval by the Synod. The committee may request assistance from appropriate committee and staff in writing job descriptions. Mission Network staff job descriptions will be written by their respective boards.
- E. The committee will annually provide information and recommendations to the proposed budget group and the coordinating team in the determination of annual salaries for the Synod staff for whom Human Resources Committee is responsible.
- F. The committee will meet annually with the staff to listen and to offer support in order to facilitate healthy communication.

G. When a new synod executive is to be called, the human resources committee will nominate the Nominating Committee, with additional individuals as needed to ensure the representative of each presbytery, to serve as the slate for the search committee. The slate will be presented and elected by the synod. HR committee members may be candidates for the PNC.

H. The Human Resources Committee chooses its own chair.

I. A quorum will be three (3) voting members.

Mission Networks shall be responsible for supervising their own employees and accountable to the appropriate committee of task force of the Synod. However, each Mission Network may be exempt from particular provisions, as defined in this document or by the Coordinating Team. Any deviation from these policies must be approved by the Synod with the advice of the Human Resources Committee.

II. **GENERAL POLICIES**

A. **Change in Policy:** The synod reserves the right to change any policy at any time, including those covered here. Changes will be dated and distributed to all employees after agreement by the assembly.

B. **Employment Relationship:** Employment with Synod of the Sun is voluntary, and employees serve at will.

C. **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy:** The Synod of the Sun is an equal employment opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

D. **Position Descriptions:** A position description is required for each position.

The **human resources** committee will review these descriptions at least every two (2) years. The committee will recommend any modification to the Coordinating Team after review. Mission Networks will write their own employees' job descriptions subject to oversight of the appropriate body of Synod in accord with these policies.

- E. **Annual Review:** All staff will receive an annual evaluation of their progress and performance. The head of staff will conduct such reviews. The head of staff will review these evaluations with the **human resources** committee. Mission Networks will evaluate their own employees subject to oversight of the appropriate body of the Synod in accord with these policies.

- F. **Record Keeping:** The Synod Leader is responsible for the oversight of the full-time and part-time staff, including job descriptions, annual evaluations, payroll and tracking of hours, and government-required documentation and other job-related record keeping.

- G. **Employment Probationary Period:** The first 90 days of employment constitute a probationary period which gives both the employee and the supervisor the opportunity to evaluate interest in and qualifications for the position under actual working conditions. After the probationary period, a written performance appraisal is discussed. Separation policies do not apply to employees working under a probationary employment period.

- H. **Safety:** The synod and staff make every effort to provide a safe working environment for all employees. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, the synod requests that employees do everything reasonable and necessary to keep the synod office a safe place to work. **Sexual Misconduct Prevention**

and Boundary Training is required for all staff; synod leaders and ministers are already required by BOO to take this training every thirty-six months.

- I. **Synod Leaders Discretionary Fund:** When the budget allows the Synod Leader a discretionary allowance for pastoral care-special needs, he or she is free to use the sum when other Presbyterian funds available have already been explored. This is often sensitive and confidential, but the Synod Leader is to share, if only, the expenditure amount with the Moderator and the Coordinating Council.

III. COMPENSATION

Synod may employ full- or part-time staff in exempt and non-exempt positions. Exempt and non-exempt distinctions are defined in the Fair Labor and Standards Law. Mission Networks are responsible for setting compensation in accord with these policies except when granted deviations.

- A. **Salaries:** The synod is committed to salary policies that provide fair pay for the work performed, incentives for personal achievement and growth, and flexibility to meet changes in duties and the cost of living. Salaries will normally be reviewed every twelve (12) months. The synod executive will consult with the human resources committee, which will make recommendations regarding staff salaries to the coordinating team and budget group. Mission Networks shall set the compensation for their employees, subject to these policies and oversight of the appropriate synod body. Part-time employment is typically a non-exempt role of 34 hours or less, who is eligible for overtime pay on an hourly basis with agreement and

oversight of their supervisor. The part-time role may have other benefits, including flexible hours at the discretion of the Synod Leader, based on the needs of the Synod. At the discretion of the organization and the Synod Leader, the part-time employee may be salaried with the freedom of setting their own schedule.

- B. **Pensions & Insurance:** may be offered as defined in attached sheets or successor documents.
- C. **Social Security:** All salaried and hourly employees are governed by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (Social Security).
- D. **Continuing Education:** Each non-exempt staff employee has five (5) days per year, and each exempt staff employee has two (2) weeks per year of continuing education. Funding is designated annually for participation in continuing education for the enhancement of skills used in their work or to be added to their responsibilities on the initiative of their supervisors and/or the synod executive.

Funding and the annual two weeks for continuing education may be accumulated, not to exceed three (2) years. How this discretionary time is planned is agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor or supervisory group in support of the Synod's calendar of events. Funding and time to attend the annual Southwest Region conference of the Administrative Personnel Association (PCUSA) is granted to non-exempt employees. If work prevents employees from attending the regional conference, they may attend the national conference with the same time and funding as they would have

used to attend the regional conference.

- E. **Days Off:** Each full-time non-exempt staff employee works a 37.5-hour week. Specific days off will be selected with the approval of the synod executive and will ordinarily be the same days each week.

F. Vacation Days: Exempt staff are entitled to four weeks of vacation annually.

Full-time non-exempt staff are entitled to ten (10) working days of vacation granted annually after one (1) year of continuous service; after five (5) years of service they will receive fifteen (15) days of vacation annually. Part-time non-exempt staff will have five (5) paid days of vacation granted annually after one (1) year of continuing service; after five (5) years of service they will receive ten (10) days of vacation annually. First year vacation is granted on a prorated basis based on hire month. Vacation may be granted **all at once or in increments**, all to be charged to the total vacation leave. All vacation leave will be pre-arranged and approved by the synod **leader**. Vacation time will not be cumulative from year to year, though with the permission of the synod executive, vacation from one year may be used in the first quarter of the next year. Contract employees receive no vacation pay. **The Synod Leader will provide a calendar of his/her schedule in an informal format to the Coordinating Council. The Synod Leader's vacation is most often dictated from his employment letter and Terms of Call.**

If a non-exempt employee started in:	Full-time:	Part-time:
January	10.0 days/yr	5 days/yr.
February	9.0 days/yr.	4.5 days/yr.

March	8.0 days/yr.	4 days/yr.
April	7.5 days/yr.	3.5 days/yr.
May	6.5 days/yr.	3 days/yr.
June	6.0 days/yr.	2.5 days/yr.
July	5.0 days/yr.	2 days/yr.
August	4.0 days/yr.	2 days/yr.
September	3.0 days/yr.	1.5 days/yr.
October	2.5 days/yr.	1 day/yr.
November	1.5 days/yr.	.5 days/yr.
December	.5 days/yr.	0 days/yr.

G. **Holidays:** Exempt and non-exempt paid employees closed New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on Saturday, Sunday, or other day when office is closed, the **Synod Leader** will determine which alternate days will be observed as holidays. If the holiday falls within a vacation period, the additional time may be added to the vacation time with the approval of the **Synod Leader**. Contract employees will not receive holiday pay. **The Synod Leader has the freedom to offer comp. days.**

H. **Personal Business Leave:** Each full-time staff member will receive ten (10) working days of personal leave during each calendar year. Personal leave will be cumulative from year to year but will not exceed 120 working days. Personal leave entitlement during the first year of employment will be prorated

based on hire month. Each part-time staff member will receive five (5) paid days of personal leave per calendar year; this time will be cumulative from year to year but will not exceed 120 working days. Personal leave pay is based on the employee's average daily rate. At the time of termination of employment, either voluntary or involuntary an employee will have no claim for pay in lieu of unused personal leave. Contract employees will not receive any personal leave. Personal leave shall be documented by the Synod Leader or in the case of the Synod Leader, by the Chair of the Committee.

If an employee started in:	Full-time:	Part-time:
January	10.0 days/yr	40 hours/yr.
February	9.0 days/yr.	36 hours/yr.
March	8.0 days/yr.	32 hours/yr.
April	7.5 days/yr.	30 hours/yr.
May	6.5 days/yr.	26 hours/yr.
June	6.0 days/yr.	24 hours/yr.
July	5.0 days/yr.	20 hours/yr.
August	4.0 days/yr.	16 hours/yr.
September	3.0 days/yr.	12 hours/yr.
October	2.5 days/yr.	10 hours/yr.
November	1.5 days/yr.	6 hours/yr.
December	.5 days/yr.	2 hours/yr.

I. **Administrative Leave:**

1. A maximum of one (1) week of leave with pay will be given in the event

of the death of a member of the employee's immediate family.

2. In the event an employee is called for jury duty, regular salary will be paid for the time served. If the absence of the employee will seriously affect the operation of the office, postponement of the jury duty may be requested of the court.
3. The **synod leader** may declare the office closed because of inclement weather. Employees may be compensated without reporting to work. If the office is not declared closed, employees failing to come to work will be expected to make up for the lost time within that pay period or suffer loss of compensation for time.
4. Military leave will be granted in accordance with the law. Upon presentation of a military pay voucher, employees will be reimbursed for the difference between their normal compensation and the pay they receive while on such military training duty, up to a maximum of twenty (20) calendar days a year. In addition, employees returning from active military service who apply for re-employment, and who comply with their obligations under USERRA, may return to employment as provided for in that statute and its accompanying regulations.

J. **Leave without pay:** Requests for leave without pay may be made to the synod executive and will be considered on an individual basis. **The Synod Leader has discretion to respond to each situation differently.**

K. **Workers Compensation:** The synod carries insurance to cover the cost of

work-incurred injury or illness. To be assured of maximum coverage, the employee must immediately (within 48 hours) report work-related incidents to his/her supervisor so that appropriate action can be taken to file timely claims.

- L. **Flexible Spending Plan:** If eligible, employees may designate a portion of their salary to be placed in a flexible spending plan for the purpose of covering medical expenses not covered by insurance. To receive reimbursement for medical expenses, employees are to provide validation (receipts) of expenses. Employees forfeit any monies remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year. Monies may not be carried over to a subsequent year.

IV. SABBATICAL LEAVE

May be granted in accordance with attached policies.

V. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND CHILD PROTECTION

- J. Synod of the Sun follows PC(USA) policies and constitution. Employees shall act in compliance with all policies adopted by Synod, including these. All offers of employment are pending results of a background check. Background checks for all employees shall be conducted prior to hire and every three (3) years thereafter.

Each staff member and Synod Leader must take Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Boundaries Training every thirty-six months. Synod leaders and ministers are already required by BOO to take this training every thirty-six months.

VI. SEPARATION POLICIES

- A. Exempt staff are encouraged to give a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days or the preferred amount of four (4) months' notice prior to leaving employment, and all other employees are encouraged to give fourteen (14) calendar days' notice prior to leaving.
- B. **Reduction in Force:** In the event that reduction of staff is necessary through no fault of the employee, written notice of separation will be given thirty (30) calendar days in advance. In the event notice is not given, employees will be given additional of severance pay.
- C. **Dismissal:** Dismissal will be by the Synod Leader in conversation with the moderator of the human resources committee. Dismissal of the synod executive will be by a vote of the plenary assembly upon recommendation of the human resources committee. Under extraordinary circumstances, for example, suspicion of financial or sexual misconduct, the Moderator of the Synod and the Chair of Human Resources Committee may place the executive on paid leave. Within three (3) days of this action, the Human Resources Committee shall convene to consider the process they will follow to determine whether or not to recommend the dismissal of the executive.
- D. **Synod Property:** All Synod property remains the property of the Synod and must be returned at the time of separation. Exceptions to this must be approved in writing by the Head of Staff or in the case of the Head of Staff, by the Chair of the Human Resources Committee. The Synod maintains ownership of equipment and work products. Intellectual property such as

sermons belong to the employee. The Synod maintains its right to continued use of all intellectual property developed by the employee during their time of service. Intellectual property of substantial economic value shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, but in all cases the Synod maintains its right to continued use. Copies of all intellectual property shall remain with the Synod. Electronic files, passwords, social network tied to the Synod and other programs may not be taken by the employee and must be returned to the Synod when leaving employment. All member lists with phone and email information are confidential property and stay within the synod. HR plans exit interviews with employees who have announced their intention to leave the organization where both can openly talk about things that worked well and made their job easier and things that in their opinion could be changed that would have improved their work and position. This is also a time when we historically looked at Job descriptions and compensation and other issues. This interview may happen with 1 to 2 HR members.

- E. **Continued Confidentiality and Non-Disparagement:** Former and current employees shall not disclose any sensitive or confidential information learned in the course of their employment and shall not disparage the Synod or its employees, members or constituents during or after employment.

VII. GRIEVANCE POLICY

Any employee who feels he/she has a grievance will discuss the problem first with his/her immediate supervisor. If the grievance is not resolved, the head

of staff will be consulted. If this discussion does not result in solution of the problem, the matter will then be taken to the **human resources** committee with **two designated members present**. These lines of communication will be respected; and employment difficulties will not be discussed with individual members of the synod.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All employees shall read, understand, and sign a copy of these policies. A signature on this document is an acknowledgement that the employee understands and agrees to adhere to these policies. It is the employee's responsibility to ask any questions necessary for fully understanding the meaning of these policies.

Employee Signature

Date

Revised by Personnel Committee: 2016

Approved by Synod of the Sun: August 2016

Synod Leader/Stated

Clerk Honoraria and

Reimbursements

The Synod Leader/Stated Clerk (SLSC) is often called to represent the Synod within the presbyteries and their congregations and institutions. On some occasions, the SLSC is asked to make a presentation, to lead a workshop, to preach and/or to participate in some event. The Synod budget includes funds to underwrite the expenses of the SLSC.

On some occasions, presbyteries, congregations, institutions or groups decide to offer the SLSC an honorarium and/or an expense reimbursement. Ordinarily, when this occurs, the honorarium will be deposited in the Synod Budget as miscellaneous income and any expense reimbursement into the expense account for the SLSC. The SLSC will report to the Human Resources Committee any such transactions. Travel expenses include mileage reimbursements as part of the Synod Leader's budget following the IRS standard each year.

Should the SLSC be given a material gift, such as jewelry, a liturgical stole, etc., these would be considered as personal expressions of gratitude for the SLSC and would become the SLSC's personal possessions.

Adopted by Human Resources

Committee October 7, 2025

EMPLOYER BENEFITS COVERAGE

All exempt clergy roles will carry salary and Board of Pensions benefits. Other roles will be decided case by case.

Sabbatical Guidelines

Synod of the Sun

November 2017

Policy Statement

Synod of the Sun recommends to the Synod commissioners that full-time exempt staff working for the Synod of the Sun **may** be granted a compensated sabbatical leave of at least three months following seven years of service to the Synod.

Rationale

Sabbatical leave is a planned time of study and renewal by which one seeks personal and professional growth. Sabbatical leave may include continuing education, spiritual formation, mentoring with respected teachers, and personal refreshment. It is an opportunity for an individual to disengage from regular and routine tasks so that his/her ministry may be viewed from a new perspective.

Sabbatical leave is an extension of the biblical concept of the Sabbath year of renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and an occasion for the renewal of vital energies. The goal of the sabbatical leave is to allow the staff member to return to their professional responsibilities with renewed energy, spiritual vision, and effectiveness.

Sabbatical leave is qualitatively different from “time off” or “vacation” in that there is a plan for personal and professional renewal. Neither vacation nor study leave should be affected by sabbatical leave. However, accrued vacation or study leave may be taken in conjunction with the sabbatical leave, adding no more than four additional weeks to the sabbatical leave.

Responsibilities of the Person Requesting Sabbatical Leave

1. Bring a written proposal for a sabbatical leave and an outline for sabbatical time to the **Human Resources** Committee of Synod at least six months prior to the anticipated leave.
2. Secure the approval of the Synod for the sabbatical leave through recommendation of **Human Resources** Committee to Synod and work with the Synod staff to provide the necessary coverage for professional responsibilities.
3. Assure the Synod of continued service to the Synod for at least one year from the conclusion of the sabbatical leave. (Taking a sabbatical leave cannot formally obligate one to continued service to the Synod, but it should at least be the intent of the person at the time of the sabbatical.)
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities, in consultation with the Executive Committee or responsible committee, prior to departing on sabbatical leave.
5. Upon return, present a written and verbal overview of the sabbatical experience to the synod.

Synod Responsibilities

1. **Human Resources** Committee is to share a copy of the approved plan for the sabbatical leave with the Executive Committee, or responsible committee, of Synod for information prior to Synod action.
2. Synod, through the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, acts on the proposal for sabbatical leave. Negotiation of the details of the proposal will ordinarily be completed at least four months prior to the leave. Details are to be worked out through the Personnel Committee of Synod.
3. Continue the terms of call to the minister/educator during the sabbatical leave.
4. Fully fund any temporary pastoral or professional services necessary in the absence of the minister or educator. Synod may wish to set aside funds each year, in anticipation of requests for sabbatical leave.

Resource Information

The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment Program housed at Louisville Seminary, provides study grants for pastoral leaders.

JRF, May, 2004

Revised by committee, Nov 2017

Synod of the Sun
Fall 2025
Synod Assembly
Moderator's Report

It is hard to believe it has been almost a year since I first took this place as Moderator of the Synod of the Sun. It has been a busy year, as I am sure you can tell by reading the attached committee reports.

Sometimes, I think we become so focused on that “thing” we are doing we forget to look at the big picture. Today, I want to take a few minutes for us to see that all together, we are an amazing team of dedicated stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to us. The work of the Synod of the Sun.

Let me begin by saying we have an amazing staff and an amazing Coordinating Team, dedicated to serving this Synod. They are all helped by an amazing body of commissioners serving the various commissions and committees that conduct the work of the Synod. (Yes, I know I used “amazing” three times in two sentences, but I cannot think of a better word to describe the people of this Synod.)

I am not going to bore you by repeating information that you will find in each of their reports included in your meeting packet. I want to express my sincere gratitude for all the work that they do.

Our mission is to serve Christ by “connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the Synod's bounds, because we believe when we work together across boundaries, we make visible the Good News and find wholeness as the Body of Christ. In our common calling, we impact lives together.”

Countless lives have been impacted in the past year by the work of this Synod.

We have connected with our seventeen covenant partners and two associations through contacts and relationship building. We look forward to renewing our covenants with several of them during this meeting.

We have empowered our young leaders receiving training through the Hispanic Ministries Mission Network's "Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today" and "Are You There Yet?" training programs.

The work of the networks N4D4-Network for Dismantling Racism and HMMN-Hispanic Ministries Mission Network and Synod Youth Workshop are expanding their reach and focus through new and creative programs. The Commissioned Pastors Network, which has taken a break since COVID, is on the verge of reemerging with new ways to bring Commissioned Pastors and small church leaders together in the coming year. So, keep an eye out for those things to come.

We are equipping our leaders through the work of the EP and Clerk's Forums, giving them an opportunity to meet, together, for worship, fellowship and learning opportunities. We are exploring new and innovative ways of equipping our Presbytery leadership.

Grants and scholarships have allowed students to pursue their callings to serve God and Christ through financial support of their continuing education.

We have empowered our youth to grow and explore and learn beyond the bounds of their local churches as they were given opportunities to take part in the Synod Youth Conference and Triennium this past summer through grants that paid for their transportation and/or registration fees.

Our college students have benefitted from learning through opportunities at John Knox Ranch UKIRK gatherings, also funded, in part by grants.

There are not enough good things that can be said about Kathy Lee-Cornell and her development and leadership of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Response. She will be missed, even as we wish her well on her new call and welcome with open arms our new SPDR leader. The number and diversity of

natural disasters that have hit our Synod in the past year are almost beyond comprehension. Through the work of SPDR, we have been able to reach out the loving hand of Christ to those in the most traumatic of circumstances. We have been able to work with local churches to be those hands as they prepare disaster relief kits and buckets for siblings in Christ they may never meet. SPDR has been able to provide countless resources for churches to be prepared in the case of a disaster in their community.

I invite and encourage you to spend time on our Synod website, listen to Sunspot podcasts, visit our social media pages and explore what Thomas Riggs and Lindsay Freeman-McCarthy continue to build not only for us, but for countless other churches, Presbyteries and Synods throughout the country through the Communication Services Plan.

I also invite you to consider where you can serve, in your role as Synod Commissioner. Which commission or committee is God calling you to?

May God be with each of you and shower you with blessings and peace,

Sharon Curry, 2025 Moderator

Serving Christ

The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

A ministry to and for the
Presbyterian Church (USA)

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Peaks

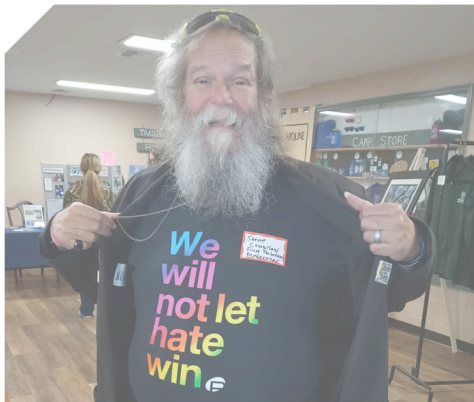
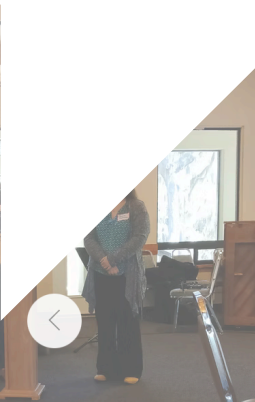


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The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

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
(Soon to merge with the Presbytery
of Kendall)
Presbytery of Northern Kansas
Presbytery of Southern Kansas
Missouri Union Presbytery
Grand Canyon Presbytery
de Cristo Presbytery
Mountain Laurel Presbytery
Presbytery of Coastal Carolina
Central Florida Presbytery
Presbytery of Peaks and Plains
Presbytery of Wabash Valley
Trinity Presbytery
Presbytery of South Alabama
St. Augustine 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

Notes:

We have 30 partners from four time zones.

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

We generate an average of 100 social media posts per week.

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk Report: Fall 2025 Synod Assembly

This past August we said “farewell” to the Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell from the Directorship of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery. She leaves us to join PDA as the Associate for National Disaster Response, so in many ways she is completely gone from our synod and our work. She will be the PDA’s representative on the SPDR Leadership Team and will be working with our partnership on behalf of PDA. As of the writing of this report, the Leadership team is in the process of discerning who will lead us in the Disaster Recovery Partnership as the Director. We hope to be able to reveal the name of the new director at the Fall Assembly.

Words are not enough to express the gratitude we have for work Kathy has done to build our Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery. Her leadership not only built the partnership as we have today but has set the course for the coming years. Her excellence and professionalism have, to be sure, set the bar high for her successor, but has also left SPDR on footing to allow a smooth transition into the tenure of her successor. Again, on behalf of the Synod of the Sun, I say “thank you” to Kathy, and pray for the Lord to continue blessings her ministry.

In early January, 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. I feel we have been successful in pursuing our 2025 priorities as ambitious as they are. **The Leadership Retreat will be held again at MO on January 4-6, 2026.** This will give us the opportunity to evaluate our 2025 work and reset our priorities for 2026.

In February, we welcomed a new Covenant Partner in NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children). As a result, I was invited to join them on a trip to Romania in July to see their work for myself. It was as eye-opening and fulfilling as it was tiring. It was a ten-day trip that included a little site-seeing to get a feel for the country: its history, people, and culture. But most importantly I was able to learn about NOROC, its history, current work and its impact on children. In a culture where one’s future potential is often decided by your circumstances and development by the age of three, it was exciting to be a part of a ministry that has enabled 32 young people to receive a college education, and many more to secure work beyond the most menial jobs. With more than 40 years of youth ministry experience it was exciting to see another organization actively raising the expectations and prospects of young people who are far too easily written off by society.

By far, the best part of the trip was meeting and working with the children. The team led a three-day camp bringing together groups of young people from smaller towns across Tulcea County, and two half-day camps for young people in Tulcea and Isaccea, both along the Danube River which forms the border with Ukraine. What was comforting to me was having it confirmed that youth in Romania are not all that different than those I have known in America, only with different cultural experiences. Not so comforting was the fact that they joke and laugh at me just like the American kids over the past 40 years.

Speaking of Ukraine, we met with two of the refugee families sponsored by NOROC who had fled the war and were living in Romania. Hearing their stories and their appreciation for the hospitality of their neighbors was both inspiring and heart-rending. The day camp in Isaccea was our second visit to that town. A few days earlier we were there to visit the river-crossing that serves as one of the main border-crossings between Ukraine and Romania. Isaccea is the crossing that NOROC uses in their continued support of a refugee camp in southern Ukraine. We were afforded a tour of the facilities with one of the border guards who started there just before the outbreak of the war. His perspective was enlightening as he very calmly spoke of the increased traffic since the war began and how they dealt with the three Russian drone attacks to which they were subjected. It was truly sobering to receive the news two weeks later of the drone attack on Isaccea, as they were no longer faceless strangers thousands of miles away.

At the writing of this report, we have received inquiries from several other ministries about the possibility of forming covenant partnerships. It is my hope and expectation that along with the renewal of Covenant partnerships at the Fall Assembly, we will approve a few of these partnerships.

Turning to my role as the stated clerk, we do have one item of business for the Assembly. I have received a letter from Cimarron Presbytery informing me that according to G-3.0301 of the Book of Order, they are no longer in compliance with the minimum standard of ten sessions and ten Ministers of Word and Sacrament and are not likely to achieve that minimum any time soon.

The three Oklahoma presbyteries (Cimarron, Eastern Oklahoma, and Indian Nations) have each voted to begin a deliberate process of exploring the merging of the three into one. This process is expected to take at least two years and will be explored with input and in consultation with the Synod of the Sun (in accordance with G-3.0403c). With the cooperation and assistance of INP and EOP to assure the proper fulfillment of the responsibilities assigned to Cimarron Presbytery during this time of transition, I propose that **the Synod of the Sun grant Cimarron Presbytery an exception to the provisions of G-3.0301 and ask the General Assembly for its approval of this exception.**

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

- Attended presbytery meetings in Arkansas, Cimarron, Eastern Oklahoma, Indian Nations, Mission, New Covenant, Palo Duro, Southern Louisiana Presbyteries, and Tres Rios.
- Attended the online EP Forum gatherings and the EP Forum Gathering in OKC.
- Attended Synod Executive gathering in Georgia.
- The Teacher asked the students, "How do you know when the night has ended, and the day is dawning?" The first people to answer this question correctly will get a prize.

- Met with representatives of six of our Covenant Partners.
- Represented the synod and participated in three Covenant Partner events
- Represented the Synod of the Sun in search for the new Director of SPDR
- Driven roughly 15,710 miles and flew roughly 13,907 miles.

Upcoming Dates:

November	2-5	Synod Executive gathering in Dallas
	9-11	Mid-Council Gathering in Louisville
	13-14	HMMN event in San Antonio
	14-15	Oklahoma Tri-Presbytery Meeting (Sequoia SP, OK)
	22	PCHAS event in Itasca, TX
December	1	Oklahoma Presbyteries Task Force Guthrie, OK)
January	4-6	Synod Leadership Retreat (Mo Ranch, TX)
	21-24	APCE (Pittsburgh, PA)
February	23-24	Synod Assembly
	24-25	Synod Clerks Gathering

2025 has 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

10/05/2025**Empowerment Committee Report to the Synod of the Sun****Fall Assembly**

Greetings, in the precious name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Our guiding verse for this year has been Isaiah 43:19 “See, **I** will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not be aware of it? **I** will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” (ESV)

It is with great joy we provide the Synod of the Sun the following report giving witness the verse quoted above.

The Empowering Committee, by the grace of God, remained true and focused to the mission and goals outlined at the beginning of the year by the Synod of the Sun’s Leadership Team. This committee made it possible for several ministries within our Synod to flourish. Grants were allotted to border and immigration ministries, youth ministries, and Hispanic ministries allowing dreams to become reality. People in different corners of our mission field felt the tangible support of their Synod. They experience both, personal and communal growth, as they gathered with fellow believers making a difference in the Kingdom of God.

We provide the following details for a greater understanding of what new things God accomplished through his people and for his people to reach others to become part of the greater kingdom of God.

By God’s grace, we look forward to see what other new things our Good Lord has for our Synod in 2026.

Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos Baladez, Ph.D. – Moderator, Empowering Committee

TRES RIOS BORDER MINISTRY FOUNDATION

Marta Pumroy, Coordinator of Tres Rios Border Foundation

The Tres Rios Border Foundation was one of our grant recipients this year. They have a rich history rooted in advocacy and support for migrants and asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border. It evolved from the Presbyterian Border Ministry, which has been active for over three decades. The foundation officially incorporated under the Tres Rios Presbytery in 2020.

The Tres Rios Border Foundation mission is to inspire, equip, and connect PC(USA) congregations on the U.S.-Mexico border and beyond – towards loving God and neighbor. They

do this through truth-telling about the migrant experience on the border, inviting groups in for 3-day border encounters to experience, witness, and share out, as well as assisting with direct support on both sides of the border. A strong focus, especially in the current dangerous climate for immigrants, is to address and promote narrative change, while also focusing on systems, and personal change. Groups that hear presentations or attend a border encounter are empowered to take action in their communities.

Tres Rios Border Foundation will be hosting the Synod of the Sun's 2025 fall assembly being held in El Paso.

Synod Youth Workshop

Leah McFadden Co-Moderator Empowering Committee

Synod Youth Workshop 2025 was a wonderful week of connection, worship and fun. The conference was once again held at the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The total number of participants including staff was 146. This is very close to the number we had in 2024 and is especially significant given that it is a Triennium year. Historically attendance is about 10% less during a Triennium year. We are aware of some churches who normally attend SYW that opted for Triennium this year since it typically only occurs every 3 years. One church had to back out at the last minute because of the tragic loss of members in the Hill Country floods. Given all of these factors, the Leadership Team is especially pleased with the turnout and hopeful that numbers will increase in 2026. Eight presbyteries were represented across 4 states.

Rev. Alexandra Pappas, senior pastor of FPC Georgetown was the keynoter. The theme developed by Alex and the Youth Planning Team was "Let Light Lead". Alex did an exceptional job presenting the keynotes. She gave a lot of food for thought and contemplation in small group discussions. Given the recent tragedy in the Texas Hill Country, her messages were timely and truly helped the participants cope with and process their feelings. She encouraged all to hold on to hope and understand that even in the darkness, God will always prevail. Videos of Alex's keynotes are available on SYW's Facebook page.

The scholarship awarded by Synod of the Sun was very significant to the success of the conference. The Leadership Team strongly believes that many of the scholar shipped participants would not have been able to attend without this financial assistance. We are deeply grateful that these young people were able to experience the love of God and church family, especially in such challenging times. Fifty seven scholarships were awarded from the grant monies received. Sixteen churches and five presbyteries were represented. Of the participants receiving full registration scholarships, their home churches raised the money for their transportation to and from Tulsa. These scholarships also contributed greatly to the ethnic diversity of the conference.

On Thursday, Service Project Day, the Small Groups and Staff spent the day serving 10 non-profits in Tulsa.

This year we had a couple of special visitors. Laura Fleming with Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services made a presentation during large group time to discuss careers in social work and the need for this. PCHAS brochures were put in the participants' packets. We were happy to welcome Synod of the Sun Treasurer, Bill Wiles, as he joined us for some large and small group time. We are always grateful to Rev. Todd Freeman and College Hill PC for their hospitality to our staff for orientation meetings and housing our participants who travel longer distances and arrive on Sunday.

Work has already begun on SYW 2026!



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



This year, HMMN hosted several workshops. Three were held in the spring, including its annual meeting at Austin Seminary, and two workshop have been offered in the fall. These workshops have been attended by members representing 8 different congregations from four different presbyteries within our Synod. During the summer, HMMN “ambassadors” were sent to visit

different churches to see what needs they had. One of the most pressing need was a digital footprint. As a result of identifying this need, two workshops were offered, one in September and the other in October. Matching grants were made available to those in assistance. With this, the attendees were challenged and informed of the different platforms available to reach out to their respective communities and beyond.

The HMMN leadership team was contacted by the Rev. Rosa B. Miranda, Asociada para el Apoyo Congregacional Intercultural Hispano/Latino Associate for Hispanic/Latino-a Intercultural Congregational Support Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries Interim Unified Agency, Presbyterian Church (USA) to host a regional workshop. The 226th PCUSA General Assembly RSG-05's resolution to support Brazilian Hispanic ministries within the denomination provides us with an opportunity to gather together to discern and determine next steps at a regional gathering to Re-Imagine Hispanic ministries within PC(USA). This event will take place in November, at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, in San Antonio Texas, where our Synod Leader the Rev. Mitch Miller and Mission Presbytery's Transitional General Presbyter, the Rev. Bobby Musengwa will be in attendance.

God permitting, the HMMN Planning Committee will be meeting later this year to plan out the next phase of a three year plan. They will then submit these plans to the HMMN Board for review and approval.

N4DR

Network For Dismantling Racism

It began with a Synod-sponsored event called Resetting the Table. The plan was to continue meeting regularly to help support each other. But, as time is moving forward, there was less enthusiasm. The network will be looking to renew enthusiasm by hopefully planning a reunion event in the Fall.

Three SunSpots podcasts on Dismantling Racism were recorded and broadcasted in 2025. Kristy Rodgers, chair of N\$DR, is currently helping write a new confession for our churches within PC(USA) . This Confession will address fears and anger generated by unidentified issue of idolatry.

The committee continues meet and discuss means of fighting racism.

The committee seeks diversity in order to make this network more effective and is open to suggestions of people who might be opened to serve as new committee members.

Isiah 43:19 "See, **I** will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not be aware of it? **I** will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." (ESV)

Lord, by your marvelous grace, we can see and we give witness and offer you all the glory, honor, and praise! Amen.



6100 Colwell Blvd; Irving, TX 75039; 214/390-1894

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

In this report, celebrate with me awarding

\$104,196.25

to date.

Broken into categories by presbytery and line item,
I also share photos and stories of the ways,
we, the people and congregations
of the Synod of the Sun serve, worship, and grow together.

Lastly, though every recipient is so thankful,
this report concludes with our amazing crews attending Triennium this year.

Yours in Christ,

Polly Williams...

The Rev. Miss Polly Warren Williams
Moderator, Synod of the Sun Grants and Scholarships 2025
pollywarren@icloud.com 214/740-0122



6100 Colwell Blvd; Irving, TX 75039; 214/390-1894

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

\$104,196.25

Cimmarron	\$ 700.00
EASTERN OKLAHOMA	\$ 2,250.00
Grace presBYtery	\$11,996.25
Indian Nation	\$ 6,700.00
Mission	\$28,700.00
New Covenant	\$11,600.00
Palo Duro	\$ 1,300.00
Arkansas	\$21,450.00
South Louisiana	\$14,500.00
Tres Rios	\$ 5,000.00



6100 Colwell Blvd; Irving, TX 75039; 214/390-1894

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

Account codes: 61040 Mission Grants



"I'm Rev. Mandi Richey, and I'm excited to share how the Genesis Creative Collective is transforming space into sacred, creative community in East Austin."

Mission Statement: The Genesis Creative Collective creates community by offering space for groups to explore the intersection of **creativity, spirituality, and**

faith. Rooted in **radical hospitality**, we welcome all as beloved of the Divine.

- Outreach ministry of Genesis Presbyterian Church
- Formed post-COVID to support displaced arts & education organizations
- Space offered at **below market rate**
- A **mission initiative** within Mission Presbytery



- **Shared Space:** Pews removed → now a flexible theatre and event venue

Photo confession: my photo of photos is blurred. The photos submitted to me were not. Thanks, polly

New Covenant

Clear Lake PC Welcome Refugee Programs

A program that welcomes highly vetted refugee families to assist with rental and utility assistance and emergency food supplies.

Covenant Kids Oklahoma

a program working toward licensing the kitchen and increasing hours to better serve neighborhood educators and low income families.

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

71120 Albert Crisp Endowment

*FROM POLLY: KUDOS TO SYNOD TREASURER, MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE BILL WILES.
IN 2025, BILL WROTE TO SYNOD COVENANT PARTNERS:*

GOODLAND ACADEMY,
PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S HOMES AND SERVICES, and
VERA LLOYD PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY SERVICE THAT THE GENEROSITY OF MR. CRISP AND HIS DONOR RESTRICTIONS ARE HONORED DELIVERING QUARTERLY GIFTS TO THESE THREE AGENCIES IN TWO CATEGORIES SPECIFICALLY HONORING YOUTH THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS AND A PORTION OF QUARTERLY AWARDS TOWARD GENERAL PROGRAM SUPPORT.

Account Codes 71140 Course Seminary Scholarship – see detail on later page.

71150 Young Adult Volunteers

from Polly: kudos to Dan Lang, program coordinator and generous nonstop promoter of so many wonderful programs for those at risk.



Account codes: 71170 Peacemaking

The Intercultural Youth Conference

Awarded a grant toward the overhead costs  *of the event.*

NOTE: monies from this account, as well as the National Missions in Texas were used to fund this award.

Berean Presbyterian Community Center

Awarded a grant toward supplies for the homeless and seniors at risk.

NOTE: monies from this account, as well as Old Age Concerns were used to fund this award.

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

Account codes: 71188 Church Extension and Development

Offering our colleagues in Oklahoma a much needed pastor's retreat

NOTE: monies from this account, as well as Old Age Concerns were used to fund this award.

Kindom ministries *young adult leadership training for LGBTQ+*

71189 National Missions in Texas

Awarded seven scholarships to the Hispanic Women's Conference At MO Ranch

OASIS COMMUNITY CENTER, SAN ANGELO

A program providing aid for low income and unhoused adults.

71200 Old Age Concerns

FEED MY SHEEP

First PC, New Orleans
PROGRAM OF HOPE HOMELESS MINISTRY



"...the award received helped us provide a hot meal to our clients and offer respite on a hot day:



we distributed leftovers to those suffering from food insecurity and hope to continue the meal quarterly.



we increased our distribution of bus passes and reimbursed expenses for publication materials garnering awareness and potential financial support within the community. We gratefully appreciate the support. From Karen Donaldson

First PC, Garland, TX COMMUNITY BREAKFAST AND SACK LUNCH

Summarized: Our program brings together a diverse group of older adults, Hispanic families with small children and individuals experiencing homelessness. Our serving team includes leader adults, Boy Scouts, and many older adults, representing a diverse group. This ministry serves people experiencing homelessness, families experiencing food insecurity and older adults."

New Covenant — Houston
PRESBYTERIAN SERVICE CENTER

Older Adult Relocation Assistance

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

71210 Higher Education

Under the leadership of Jeremy Wilhelmi, University Chaplain, University of the Ozarks Spiritual Life, offers an Alternative Spring Break Border Encounter week at the U.S./Mexico border in partnering with ABARA out of El Paso, TX with diverse backgrounds in the students taking part in an immersive learning experience



- + learning the multiple issues facing those along the border
- + developing compassion and empathy for those suffering;
- + providing humanitarian care to those in greatest need,
- + discern through the lens of faith ways to respond to these systemic issues when we return home.



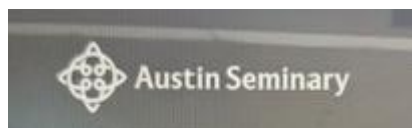
"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God" – 1 John 4:7
The Beloved Community at UCM Texas State fostered authentic friendships, nurtured inclusive small groups, and culminated in a Friendsgiving retreat at John Knox Ranch in November. At UCM, students have been

intentionally cultivating a diverse and welcoming ministry. This initiative builds upon the vision of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., emphasizing racial reconciliation, social justice, and personal Christian transformation.



71910 SOSPF Student Scholarships

Colton Hedrick attending Austin



Amanda McDonald and Taylor Kronberg attending Dubuque



from polly: amazing people are being called to seminary. As I learned of Colton, Amanda and Taylor (and Miranda below) I received praise about each and was renewed in my own call and inspired beyond measure.

71140 Course Seminary Scholarship

Miranda Dolive also attending Dubuque writes in her thank you note that growing up and attending seminary in the Disciples of Christ tradition, her Presbyterian History and Confessions course has been beneficial to her understanding of PCUSA worship, polity, history, theology and practice and served to prepare her well for her upcoming theology exam toward ordination studying each creed and confession in the book of Confessions.

Grants and Scholarships

Your Mission dollars at work

Account codes: 74300 International Mission Trips



Photo credit: used to publicize the annual trip and growing mission.
From Beckett Wilhelmi, 14 yo recipient 2024
from **Clarksville, Arkansas on a mission trip to Honduras** also funding teens and their parents, additional participants in 2025...



† "...my father serves as Chaplain at the University of Ozarks...." Other insight summarized:

† No prior trip ...has given me as much understanding of what the world is like outside of our day-to-day lives.

† the food, sense of community, their knowledge of how things work is stronger/better than I see in the States...

† knowing so many children have to help their families regularly, learning the USA considers only ourselves, "americans" and recognizing as "Americans" all who live in the Americas... Putting in a lot of hard intensive labor myself all made for a great trip so I must say, "thank you."

SUPPORTED SENDING ED KNIGHT, REPRESENTING SYNOD COVENANT PARTNER PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S HOMES AND SERVICES ON THE SYNOD COVENANT PARTNER NOROC'S TRIP THIS SUMMER!! ED, AS A FOUNDER OF NOROC, LOOKS FORWARD TO ASSISTING WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMMING.

NOTE: monies from this account, as well as the Gatewood Fund were used to support Ed's participation.

Equipping Committee Report

*The Equipping Committee has spent 2025 determining its scope and purpose. We welcome members from across the synod to join us in this work. Seeking your input on potential topics for education/training/equipping/resourcing. Please indicate your **rank order** for the following topics and **add** any topics you see as useful for the synod to host/participate in that are missing:*

- **COM/CPM Training** [Commission/Committee on Ministry and Commission/Committee on Preparation for Ministry]
- **PJC Training** [Permanent Judicial Commission]
- **Boundary Training** (required)
- **Prevention of Sexual Misconduct** (required)
- **Anti-Racism Training** (required)
- **Cultural Competencies**
- **CP/CRE/LP Exploring Synod Standards in Conversation**
- **Communication Services Plan**

Synod of the Sun - *Connections Committee*

UPDATES



Covenants we are celebrating and are signing:

- ✦ **Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center**
- ✦ **Lyon College** ✦ **Presbyterian Pan Am School**
- ✦ **Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest**
- ✦ **Tres Rios Border Foundation** ✦ **Trinity University**

Dates we met: 1/6/2025; 2/10/2025; 5/12/2025; 6/30/2025; and 9/8/2025 to date.

Ongoing Questions, conversations and considerations:

- ✦ from the Coordinating team minutes, dated Tuesday, June 10, 2025,
"If you are a covenant partner, you will have boundary training provided by the Synod, your Presbytery or your organization."
- ✦ the importance of a covenant partner having foundational, historical ties to our denomination; or to a congregation or presbytery as well as us.
- ✦ Maintaining good records on the covenant specific requirements: some look to us for a representative on their board(s) of trustees, one has a scholarship Synod initiated but managed by the school (Trinity); etc.
- ✦ What does it mean to be a covenant partner?
- ✦ What is expected of a Synod representative serving on the Board of Trustees for a covenant partner?

Uniquely connecting with the denomination:

- ✦ bringing an opportunity to serve as a sponsor for Stewardship Kaleidoscope as it met in our Synod: New Orleans in September 2025.
- ✦ bringing a request to sponsor in 2026 a breakfast for Presbyterian Professional Chaplains breakfast when their annual meeting is in New Orleans.
- ✦ Approving space use at the regional headquarters for a readership gathering of Presbyterian Women in 2026.

Yours in Christ,
Polly Williams

The Rev. Miss Polly Warren Williams

Moderator, Synod of the Sun Connecting Committee 2025

pollywarren@icloud.com

214/740-0122

A COVENANT BETWEEN LYON COLLEGE AND THE SYNOD OF THE SUN

A covenant is a contract or agreement between people of faith, affirming a shared purpose and the expectation that each party will adhere to the support of certain values and beliefs. This covenant is the basis for the commitment between the Synod of the Sun and Lyon College. By adopting this covenant, the Synod recognizes its commitment and obligation to the College as a part of the Christian mission of higher education. Equally, the College affirms its commitment to the Church, accepts its responsibility for representing the church in higher education while recognizing an obligation to the Church.

Presbyterians founded Lyon College as Arkansas College in 1872. In that same year, the College was granted a charter by the State of Arkansas. The institution changed its name in 1994 to honor the extraordinary service rendered to it by the Frank Lyon family of Little Rock. The mission of the College is: "A selective, independent teaching and learning community affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Lyon College offers both a challenging undergraduate curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and select graduate programs. In a primarily residential setting, the Lyon Collage experience is guided by the Honor System and enlightened by co-curricular programs, service and experiential learning, and opportunities for leadership. Together these foster critical, creative thought and ethical, spiritual growth that will prepare students for fulfilling personal and professional lives committed to lifelong learning and service." Through its unique and highly visible Scottish Heritage Program, Lyon College honors and shares its Scottish and Presbyterian roots. Throughout its history Lyon has chosen, voluntarily and intentionally, to maintain a vital relationship to the Church. The most tangible symbol of that relationship is the covenant with the Synod and the process by which it is renewed every five years.

Commitments of the Covenant Partners

This covenant between The Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Lyon College represents our reaffirmation to search for particular standards of excellence, to deal with what a church-related college is and to be sensitive as to how Lyon College can faithfully represent the Church in an increasingly more complex world. Both the Synod and the College recognize this covenant as the official agreement describing our primary relationship as we strive to achieve these high goals and visions.

By this Covenant:

- 1) Lyon College affirms itself as integral to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It will provide opportunities for the practice of Christian faith on its campus through worship, study and service.
- 2) Lyon College will offer a liberal arts education of superior quality in a personalized setting and will encourage the free intellectual inquiry essential to social, ethical and spiritual growth. It will adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards in its policies and institutional behavior.
- 3) Lyon College will continue, through a rich scholarly and religious heritage, to provide a culture of honor in which to develop responsible citizens and leaders committed to personal growth and service.
- 4) Lyon College will draw on its relationship with the Church to fulfill its obligations to the students it serves. The college will offer an environment in which Christians of varied backgrounds and persons of other faiths may find encouragement and support in the pursuit of the holy in their lives.
- 5) Lyon College will continue to be accredited by all appropriate accrediting bodies. It will remain committed to providing an environment in which teaching, learning and intellectual inquiry can flourish. The College will seek to affirm the values of inclusiveness and diversity in its student body, faculty, staff and board of trustees. Lyon will serve the changing needs of its students by fostering excellence and innovation in all facets of its operation and will take advantage of its location in an area of great natural beauty.
- 6) Lyon College will make its personnel available for instruction and leadership and will provide a theological resource for the wider Church.

- 7) Lyon College will represent and teach the Reformed Presbyterian tradition of thought, work and worship and will maintain an ecumenical campus ministry program directed by a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) campus minister and Clergy trustees.
- 8) Lyon College will remain available as a resource for activities of the Church.
- 9) Lyon College will keep the Synod and all appropriate church agencies informed of its work and development on a regular basis.
- 10) Lyon College will help to implement the priorities chosen by the Synod in its planning processes.
- 11) Lyon College will provide an annual report of all Church-related congregational giving upon request.

By this Covenant:

- 1) The Synod of the Sun affirms Lyon College as integral to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its mission of supporting higher education.
- 2) The Synod will encourage members of the Synod's churches to enroll at Lyon and encourage Presbyterian congregations to participate in and support Lyon's Scottish Heritage Program and other special programs which benefit students attending the College.
- 3) The Synod will promote Lyon College by providing information to the College from the Synod, by providing information about the College to each Presbytery resource center and by encouraging the use of the Lyon campus and resources for Synod and Presbytery sponsored events.
- 4) The Synod will provide financial assistance by providing funds upon request and when available, by giving the College permission to seek individual gifts and students where it will, by permitting the College to initiate proposals for financial support from particular churches and constituent Presbyteries of the Synod in whatever manner the College deems fitting and proper and by allowing the College to make general approaches to the constituency of the Synod in major capital funds campaigns, with prior approval from the Synod.

Symbols of the Covenant:

The Synod entrusts the Board of Trustees of Lyon College with the responsibility of acting in historical continuity with the expressed purpose of the founders and according to their by-laws. The essential link between church and state is the Board of Trustees. The charter provides the Board with the power to recommend to the Synod individuals to fill vacancies in its membership. In addition, if at any time the charter becomes void, all of the property privileges and powers of the Corporation known as the Board of Trustees of Lyon College shall vest in the Synod.

Effective Date

This covenant shall become effective upon approval by the Board of Trustees and the Synod.

Lyon College Chaplain

For the Synod of the Sun

Date

Date

**REVISED
COVENANT RELATIONSWPS WITH THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

**A COVENANT BETWEEN
PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL
AND THE
SYNOD OF THE SUN**

I. THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT

This covenant between the Synod of the Sun and Presbyterian Pan American School located in Kingsville, Texas, is established for the purpose of defining the relationship between the Synod and the School.

This relationship involves a spirit of mutual understanding advancing our common mission, a striving for creative solutions to problems and shared concerns, and a pledge to serve God.

This covenant is consistent with and subject to all legal documents of Presbyterian Pan American School and the Synod of the Sun (Charters, By-laws, the Book of Order, Standing Rules, etc.)

This covenant re-affirms the ongoing and future relationship between Presbyterian Pan American School and the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

II. PARTIES TO THE COVENANT

A. PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL

1. History and Relationships

Presbyterian Pan American School was founded by action of the Synod of Texas (PCUS) in 1955 by melding the assets of Texas Mexican Industrial Institute (founded in 1911) and Presbyterian School for Mexican girls (founded in 1924). From 1956 through 1974 it was operated by trustees elected by the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, by the Synod of Texas (PCUS) and by the Boards of National Missions and of World Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, under directives given by the Synod of Texas (PCUS).

On January 10, 1973 the Synod of Red River (PCUS) succeeded to the rights, titles, properties and benefits of the Synod of Texas (PCUS).

From 1974 through June 29, 1985 the Synod of Red River (PCUS) [succeeded by Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)], and five of their constituent presbyteries, New

Covenant, Mission, Grace, Palo Duro and Tres Rios, along with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, have elected persons to serve as trustees of Presbyterian Pan American School, and the Presbyteries provided regular budgeted benevolent gifts to the School annually. In 1985, the Synod of the Sun was reorganized to include eleven presbyteries.

On September 21, 1979 the Synod of Red River (PCUS) by quit claim deed conveyed title to and responsibility for the land, buildings, financial assets, and perishable property in which the Synod of Red River (PCUS) may have had interest as successor to the Synod of Texas (PCUS) to the Trustees of Presbyterian Pan American School in return for a covenant with the School that Synod and all ecclesiastical bodies would be released from any and all responsibility for debts, obligations or liabilities of the School.

2. Mission of the School

Presbyterian Pan American School is a Christian college preparatory school That educates and empowers young adults for leadership in the global community.

3. Board of Trustees and Administration

Presbyterian Pan American School is governed by an independent Board of Trustees elected by itself and the Synod of the Sun.

The School is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas and is recognized as a SO1 (c) 3 organization.

The School is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Principal staff officer is the President, who is elected by the Board and is responsible for the ongoing operation of the School.

B. THE SYNOD OF THE SUN

The Synod of the Sun is a regional council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), successor to the Synod of Red River (PCUS) and the Synod of the Sun (UPCUSA), which is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

The Synod serves the mission of Jesus Christ, communicating among and connecting with the presbyteries, Presbyterian colleges and seminary, institutions, agencies, and ministries within the region embracing Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The goal of the Synod is to facilitate these components to harmonize in ministry. The Synod proclaims and promotes the reign of God in a spirit of ecumenicity.

- e. To serve as a cultural, recreational and educational resource for the Church and neighboring communities.

2. Therefore, the School agrees:

- a. To meet its responsibilities to the Synod with regards to representation, consultation, reports and recommendations and with such details as may be necessary to reveal the purpose, programs and needs of the School;
- b. To make available to the Synod, its presbyteries and its churches information regarding the program and mission of the School, such as printed materials, video presentations and student visits;
- c. To develop, when possible, and maintain a relationship to the Presbyterian Hispanic community of the Synod and serve it as a resource, **e.g.**, Hispanic churches;
- d. To encourage and sustain an ongoing relationship with all racial ethnic communities, the National Hispanic Latino Presbyterian Caucus, and the racial ethnic ministry offices of the General Assembly;
- e. To pursue the multicultural, multilingual objectives of the School by seeking to recruit students from all cultural backgrounds;
- f. To encourage, when possible, various bodies of Synod and other church groups to visit, meet, or work on campus;

B. COMMITMENTS OF THE SYNOD TO PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL

The Synod pledges to cooperate with the School in its mission. To that end the Synod makes the following commitments:

- a. As partner with the School in its mission of multicultural, multilingual, multinational education, to encourage and aid the School in communicating and interpreting its mission, its program and its needs to Presbyterians across the Synod;
- b. To encourage and assist the School in the seeking of financial and other support for its programs;
- c. To encourage its presbyteries and churches to provide opportunity for the School to interpret its work and to encourage their responsible stewardship in its behalf;

ID. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Presbyterian Pan American School (the "Corporation") shall be governed by a board of directors which shall be referred to collectively as the "Board," and each individual director shall be referred to as a "Trustee.,,. The Board shall consist of not less than twenty (20) nor more than twenty six members. Included among these shall be nine (9) Trustees elected by the Synod of the Sun (the "Synod"), two (2) Trustees from by the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico or its congregations, and elected by the Presbyterian Pan American School Board of Trustees, and not more than fifteen (15) Trustees nominated by the Board itself (no more than six of whom may be At-Large -- members of religious bodies other than the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or members residing outside the bounds of the Synod of the Sun).

Persons so nominated will be confirmed as Trustees by majority vote of the Board and shall serve staggered three-year terms and cannot serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. The Synod will solicit recommendations from the President of the Corporation and the Board for person suitable to fill Synod vacancies on the Board. Each year the Synod will elect three (3) persons, giving consideration to those nominated by the Board itself in consultation with the President.

In selection of nominees, the Board of Trustees and the Synod shall give consideration to representation of women, minorities and alumni. Further, the Synod shall make an effort to secure broad representation from all geographical areas of the Synod.

IV. COMMITMENT OF THE COVENANT

A. COMMITMENTS OF PRESBYTERIAN PAN AMERICAN SCHOOL TO THE SYNOD

Presbyterian Pan American School is an international boarding and day school, grades 9-12, for young men and women **seeking a** college preparatory education in a Christian environment in the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions.

1. The School's purposes are:
 - a. To prepare students from many nations for admission to the college or university of their choice;
 - b. To train and encourage young people for church and/or secular service as Christian leaders for all the Americas and beyond;
 - c. To develop mature Christian young people who can relate to and function successfully in an increasingly complex, multicultural and multilingual society;
 - d. To teach young people the value and dignity of any job well done by engaging each student in meaningful and productive labor for the well-being of the school community;

- d. To list the School as one related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and recommend it to prospective students throughout the Church;
- e. To support Presbyterian Pan American School with the General Assembly agencies to the effect that the unique purpose and programs of the School be identified, promoted, and supported as a church-wide resource;
- f. To encourage and promote the ongoing close relationship between Presbyterian Pan American School and all racial ethnic communities, the National Hispanic Latino Presbyterian Caucus, and the racial ethnic ministry offices of the General Assembly.

C. A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY

While Presbyterian Pan American School serves students from many nations, the Synod and the School recognize that the School's primary constituency is people of Hispanic background. Therefore, both the School and the Synod affirm the School's unique capability to assist Synod in its Hispanic ministry. To this end:

- 1. The Synod and the School shall mutually inform one another of opportunities and challenges for Hispanic Ministry;
- 2. The School and the Synod shall share in Hispanic ministries in the Synod and beyond;
- 3. The Synod and the School shall mutually resource one another for ministering with the Hispanic community.

V. PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

This covenant shall become operative when it has been approved by the Board of Trustees of Presbyterian Pan American School and by the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). By adopting this covenant the School and the Synod pledge to advance the cause of Christ together as partners.

VI. REVIEW AND REAFFIRMATION CYCLE

The initial duration of this covenant shall be for five (5) years. Every five (5) years, a covenant review team shall be created. The covenant review team shall include two (2) representatives nominated by the Board of Trustees of the School, and two (2) representatives (one of which will be Hispanic) from the Synod of the Sun.

This team will review the current covenant and may recommend possible changes or amendments.

At the request of either the School or the Synod> a process of review and reconsideration of the covenant at an earlier time shall be initiated.

Approved by:

Board of Trustees - Presbyterian Pan American School

Representative of the Board of Trustees

Date

President

Date

Kingsville, Texas

Approved by:

The Synod of the Sun

Moderator:

Date

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Sun

Date

Irving, Texas

THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE SYNOD OF THE SUN, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A), AND TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Preamble

The Church affirms that the creating and redeeming God sustains all of life. That same God, as revealed in Jesus the Christ, calls humanity to love God and neighbor with heart, soul, strength, and mind. Taking seriously the life of the mind, the Reformed tradition continuously seeks to express this aspect of God's call in encouragement of and support for education. From the beginning of its presence on the North American continent, the Presbyterian branch of the Reformed tradition has committed itself to establishing church-related colleges and universities. Changing circumstances may call for new forms of relationship between the Church and its related colleges and universities, but the commitment itself remains consistent.

Historical Context

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church established Trinity University in 1869 in Tehuacana, Texas, to serve and witness in the field of higher education. The Church called its educational enterprise "Trinity" because of the joint work of the three founding Synods, in the name of the Holy Trinity. Trustees were elected to operate the University. These Trustees were granted the direct control and management of the institution in accordance with the legislative act of August 13, 1870, adopting the original charter. The University was moved to Waxahachie, Texas, in 1902, and in 1906, with the union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the University became related to that united church. In 1942 Trinity was moved to San Antonio. The legal relationship between the Church and the University continued, through the Synod's authority to elect the Trustees, until the Board of Trustees became a self-perpetuating body in 1969 and entered a covenant relationship with the Synod of Texas of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In 1983, with the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church U.S., the University retained its vital covenantal relationship with the reunited Church called the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a larger reorganized Synod of the Sun. The Synod and Trinity University are intimately bound to one another in common heritage and in contemporary witness. Each institution should express in structure its own integrity and its own distinctive mission. As each understands its own unique role, the mission of the other will be enriched and strengthened. The mission of each to the other will be hindered if the distinctive role of either is blurred or absorbed in that of the other. Trinity University and the Synod of the Sun of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with the dissolving of legal ties, in 1969, declared themselves bound in a covenant of trust and mutual obligation, to which were added in 1983 and 1989 supplemental Statements of Understanding, further interpreting the Covenant Affirmation. These Covenant Affirmations honor the shared legacy and ongoing witness and affirm the vision and resources of generations of Trinitonians and friends who sought to support and endow a University rooted in the values of the Reformed tradition. The following is a revision of that Covenant and Statements of Understanding approved by the Trinity University Board of Trustees on September {xx}, 2025 and by the Synod of the Sun on October {xx}, 2025.

The Covenant Affirmations

- I. The Trustees of Trinity University, affirming their covenant relationship with God, enter into a covenant with their predecessors in office, with the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and with each other to pursue the purpose for which Trinity University was founded and the mission for which it endures. This Covenant commits the Board of Trustees to the following:
 - A. That Trinity University shall recognize its birth and origin in the concern of the Presbyterian Church for the intellectual and spiritual growth of all people.
 - B. That Trinity University shall continue to express this concern of the Church in higher education by offering quality education committed to the wholeness of life interpreted and illumined by the Reformed tradition. And continue to be an institution in the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences with a balance between the humanities, fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences, with the addition of limited and carefully selected professional degree programs, and with such other academic offerings as may seem to the Board of Trustees wise and proper in accordance with a continued goal for academic excellence.
 - C. That Trinity University shall continue to recognize its opportunity to provide leadership for the various aspects of the Church's life, to make available its facilities for meetings of the Synod, Presbyteries, and other church activities; encouraging University personnel to participate as their time permits and seek to provide to the Synod informational materials for the Synod's use in supporting Trinity University throughout the region.
 - D. That Trinity University shall administer faithfully funds given in trust for purposes related to the training of leadership for the Church and other specified or related purposes.
 - E. That Trinity University shall be nondiscriminatory and shall actively seek in all its policies intentional inclusion admitting qualified students and employing faculty and staff without restrictions as to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military/veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
 - F. That Trinity University, through its Board of Trustees, shall nominate and elect its own trustees and shall continue its commitment to intentional inclusion without restrictions as to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military/veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
 - G. That Trinity University shall be maintained and perpetuated to merit regional and national recognition for quality and leadership as it represents open and responsible education, an essential resource in a free society as well as a particular commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- H. That Trinity University shall seek to instill in its students the ideals of rigorous pursuit of truth, freedom of thought and investigation, and respect for differing opinions, including differences in religious beliefs and practices.
- II. The Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), recognizing its covenant relationship with God, enters into a covenant with its predecessors and with the Trustees of Trinity University to pursue the purposes for which Trinity University was founded and for which it continues. This covenant commits the Synod to the following:
 - A. That the Synod and the appropriate General Assembly agencies shall continue their interest in and support of Trinity University, and that Trinity University shall continue to be listed as a college related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
 - B. That the Synod may provide appropriate resource persons to confer and to consult with representatives of Trinity University, including an advisor to serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. And may provide as desired by the Board of Trustees a report on the current work and ministry of the Synod of the Sun.
 - C. That the Synod shall encourage financial support from individuals, churches, and presbyteries to Trinity University.
 - D. That the Synod shall continue to support the University, its faculty, students and administration with its prayers; and through its presbyteries and churches shall provide opportunities for Presbyterian youth to learn of the educational opportunities available at Trinity University, and that particular encouragement will be extended to persons interested in church-related professions.

Statements of Understanding

- I. Trinity University's understanding of its commitment to the Covenant is expressed through the following intentions:
 - A. Persons elected to Trinity University's Board of Trustees shall support the University's covenantal relationship with the Synod as represented by this Covenant and the Board shall include concern for church relations and religious life in the work of one of its committees.
 - B. Trinity University shall make an annual report available to the Synod of the Sun furnishing the Synod with materials relating to its mission and progress. As well as an annual report on scholarships supported by the Synod.
 - C. There shall be a report, review, and, if necessary, revision of this Covenant every five years.

- D. The University through its programs and services will continue to show concern for the Church and religious life. This will occur in numerous ways including its ongoing contact with the Synod and other parts of the Presbyterian Church; the maintenance of a full-time endowed University Chaplain; a robust and diverse religious studies department; opportunities for vocational discernment; lectures for the enrichment of the spiritual life of the campus and broader community; active involvement in the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities; and further cultivation of relationships with individuals, and where appropriate, with congregations and governance structures of other expressions of faith and also with other denominations closely linked by historical and ecumenical relationships to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- II. The Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) understands its commitment to the Covenant through the following intentions:
- A. The Synod of the Sun, through its appropriate representatives, may suggest the names of persons who could ably serve on the Board of Trustees who would be supportive of the covenant relationship.
 - B. The Synod of the Sun will seek to continue to find ways to support the University as it articulates its vision, mission, interests and concerns, and provide shared reporting about Trinity University to its constituencies.
 - C. The clergy and members of the Synod shall be urged to be advocates for church-related colleges and universities to high school students and their parents, and will especially make known the resources of the University for those interested in religious studies and pre-seminary education.
 - D. The Synod shall serve as a resource to the University for the recruitment of minority members to the University community (student body, faculty, staff, and the Board) and shall encourage the University in its striving towards intentional inclusion.
 - E. The Synod shall work with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Trinity University to support mutually beneficial efforts to utilize the Presbyterian scholarship program.

Nothing in this statement or generally in the relationship of the University and Synod shall be interpreted so as to infringe upon the integrity and freedom of the faculty and administration in the pursuit of truth, nor shall the autonomy of the University's internal policies and procedures be compromised by any religious requirement or restriction.

This covenant was reviewed in 2025 and shall be reviewed again in the year 2030 by a covenant review team of representatives from the University and the Synod.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE SOUTHWEST AND
THE SYNOD OF THE SUN, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A)

The Synod of the sun is a mid-council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with historic ties to the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest (PHSSW) which date to 1978. As an agency that serve congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas and the Cumberland Presbyteries within those states, the PHSSW now seeks to form a joint covenant partnership with the Synod of the Sun.

The Synod of the Sun serves Christ by connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the Synod's bounds of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Providing leadership development, grants and scholarships, and communications services because we believe when we work together across boundaries, we make visible the Good News and find wholeness as the body of Christ. In our common calling, we impact lives together.

The Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest (PHSSW) seeks to encourage the accumulation, the preservation, and the widespread use of historical materials pertaining to the faithful and inspiring witness of Presbyterians in and from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The Society hosts an annual meeting in one of these four states and offers its services to congregations as they celebrate anniversaries and research their own histories. Its board is made up of a representative from each of the member presbyteries in the Synod of the Sun as well as representatives from the Cumberland Presbyterian constituent presbyteries.

The Synod of the Sun and Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest embrace this joint covenant partnership and agree to mutual support one another's ministries. By signing this covenant partnership, the Synod of the Sun agrees to pray for, advocate on behalf of, and support the PHSSW as it seeks to respond to the biblical admonition in Isaiah 51:1 "Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug."

The Synod affirms the mission of the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest and encourages each of its member congregations to pray, advocate and support PHSSW's ministry. The Synod will provide opportunities for the PHSSW to share its ministry at Synod gatherings and through its print and electronic communications.

By signing this covenant partnership, the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest agrees to maintain a visible presence in the life of the synod of the sun, including their member presbyteries.

This agreement is 2025 is not a legal partnership and the Synod agree that the PHSSW may establish and maintain mission partnership with other agencies and denominations. The Synod and the PHSSW agree to renew this covenant partnership in 2030.

Mitch Miller, Synod Leader/Stated Clerk;
Synod of the Sun

Date

James S. Currie, Executive Secretary
**for the Presbyterian Historical Society of
the Southwest**

Date

DRAFT COVENANT

Between Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center And the Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

I. Introduction

This covenant affirms a historic and ongoing relationship between **Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center** (hereafter *Ferncliff*) and the **Synod of the Sun** (hereafter *Synod*) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As distinct entities yoked in mutual mission, both parties agree to support, strengthen, and collaborate with one another in pursuit of shared goals rooted in faith, service, and formation.

II. Legal Standing and Governance

Ferncliff is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors and incorporated in the State of Arkansas. Its mission is:

“As an expression of God’s love, we welcome people into a life of caring for Creation, others, and themselves.”

Ferncliff operates on a 100-year lease from the Presbyterian Foundation of Arkansas, stewarding over 1,200 acres for use in Christian hospitality, faith formation, disaster response, and connection with creation.

The Synod of the Sun is a governing body of the PC(USA), serving a four-state region by fostering connection, collaboration, and innovation among its presbyteries, congregations, and ministries. This covenant reflects a desire to deepen the shared ministry between Ferncliff and the Synod.

III. Shared Purpose and Mission

This covenant is established to:

- Celebrate a mutual call to serve the Church and the world.
- Provide pathways for collaboration in leadership development, service, justice, and innovation.
- Recognize Ferncliff as a ministry partner of the Synod of the Sun.
- Affirm the historic connection and encourage deeper engagement between Ferncliff and Synod constituents.

IV. Ferncliff’s Commitments to the Synod

Ferncliff, through its Board and staff, commits to:

- A. Offer hospitality, staff leadership, and physical facilities for programs, retreats, conferences, and mission opportunities in alignment with the Synod's vision and needs.
- B. Welcome opportunities to co-create leadership or formation events with the Synod that align with its goals and serve its broader constituency.
- C. Prioritize Synod presbyteries and congregations as a core constituency by fostering relationships, extending hospitality, and seeking collaborative ways to align our collective resources in service to shared goals.
- D. Provide regular updates to the Synod on major initiatives, including new program developments, capital projects, and mission expansions.
- E. Maintain standards of excellence in safety, diversity, environmental stewardship, and faith formation, upholding the PC(USA)'s values and commitments.
- F. Nominate trustees to Ferncliff's Board or other leadership and advocacy committees with attention to Synod-wide representation and perspectives and welcome collaboration with Synod leaders in identifying strong candidates.

V. The Synod's Commitments to Ferncliff

The Synod of the Sun, through its leadership and staff, commits to:

- A. Recognize Ferncliff as a covenant partner within the PC(USA) and include Ferncliff in strategic conversations, leadership development initiatives, and mission collaborations.
- B. Give Ferncliff primary consideration as a host site for Synod-led programs and encourage its presbyteries and congregations to do the same when planning events, trainings, retreats, or mission or service trips.
- C. Collaborate with Ferncliff to promote and co-sponsor programs that advance mutual priorities in areas such as faith formation, disaster response, creation care, justice, and innovation.
- D. Interpret Ferncliff's mission and impact throughout the Synod through newsletters, reports, digital platforms, and direct engagement with presbyteries.
- E. Include Ferncliff in the Synod's network of mission partners eligible for financial support and connectional resources. The Synod will encourage congregations and presbyteries to support Ferncliff financially and relationally.
- F. Consider Ferncliff staff and Board members as valued participants in Synod working groups, networks, and advisory teams when appropriate.

VI. Covenant Maintenance and Review

This covenant shall be reviewed and renewed every five years, or at the request of either party. A review team composed of representatives from both the Synod and Ferncliff will assess progress, celebrate collaboration, and recommend updates to reflect evolving mission contexts.

Signatures

Executive Director, Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center

Date: _____

Chair, Ferncliff Board of Directors

Date: _____

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk, Synod of the Sun

Date: _____

Moderator, Synod of the Sun

Date: _____

A Joint Covenant Partnership Between The Synod of the Sun and The Tres Rios Border Foundation

The Synod of the Sun is a mid-council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with historic ties to the Tres Rios Border Foundation (TRBF) of the Tres Rios Presbytery (TRBF) which date to the foundations inception in 2020. As a foundation that serves congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with in the Synod of the Sun as well as Presbyteries and congregations across the US, the TRBF now seeks to form a joint covenant partnership with the Synod of the Sun.

The Synod of the Sun serves Christ by connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the Synod's bounds of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Providing leadership development, grants and scholarships, and communications services because we believe when we work together across boundaries, we make visible the Good News and find wholeness as the body of Christ. In our common calling, we impact lives together.

The Tres Rios Border Foundation (TRBF) mission is to inspire, equip, and connect PC(USA) congregations on the U.S.-Mexico border and beyond – toward loving God and neighbor. We do this through Border Proximity with rented office space, in a historical, spiritual, and heavily patrolled area next to the border wall. This allows us to walk alongside our partners in the area by being in relationship and conversation. Through this proximity we offer Border Response, helping shelters and other agencies meet the most pressing needs of the moment due to policy changes and immigration shifts. We focus on narrative change, personal change, and systems change by preaching and presenting about the border with the ideal of inviting others to join a Border Encounter.

The Synod of the Sun and the Tres Rios Border Foundation embrace this joint covenant partnership and agree to mutually support one another's ministries. By signing this covenant partnership, the Synod of the Sun agrees to pray for, advocate on behalf of, and support the TRBF as it seeks to respond to the biblical charge repeated in the Hebrew Bible to “Remember, you were once foreigners...” when we meet migrants with hospitality, provision, and protection echoing Jesus’ call in Matthew 25:43-45, “I was a

stranger and you did not welcome me... just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

The Synod affirms the mission of the Tres Rios Border Foundation and encourages each of its member congregations to pray, advocate, and support TRBF's ministry. The Synod will provide opportunities for the TRBF to share its ministry at Synod gatherings and through its print and electronic communications. By signing this covenant partnership, the Tres Rios Border Foundation agrees to maintain a visible presence in the life of the Synod of the Sun, including their member presbyteries.

REVIEW AND REAFFIRMATION

The initial duration of this covenant shall be for five (5) years. Every five (5) years, the parties will review the current covenant and may recommend possible changes or amendments before renewal of the covenant.

Synod of the Sun, PC(U.S.A.)

Date: _____

By: _____

2025 Moderator, Synod of the Sun

Date: _____

By: _____

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk

Tres Rios Border Foundation

Date: _____

By: _____

Board President

Date: _____

By: _____

Border Coordinator

Partnership Covenant between Solar Under the Sun and Synod of the Sun Covenant

Covenant description:

The covenant between Solar Under the Sun and the Synod of the Sun describes the partnership between the two organizations, including the vision, mission approach, and priorities by the partners, as well as the partners' respective roles and mutual expectations.

Partner descriptions and responsibilities:

1. Solar Under the Sun

Solar Under the Sun (SUS) is a covenant partner of the Synod of the Sun (Synod), a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

SUS will work with willing partners in the Synod of the Sun to equip disciples of Jesus Christ to end energy poverty by providing technical training, educational resources, and best practices in mission partnership.

Mission and Values

Solar Under the Sun is dedicated to ending energy poverty by providing comprehensive training and resources, empowering communities in partnership across cultural and national boundaries, and sharing the light and love of Christ with the world.

- A. Empowering -- We work to end energy poverty through partnerships that grow the knowledge and capacity of communities.
- B. Integrity -- We commit ourselves to build relationships rooted in honesty, cultural awareness, and the love of neighbor.
- C. Stewardship -- We recognize that any solutions to energy poverty must be achieved through care for creation and the careful use of the resources entrusted to us.
- D. Faith and Love -- We serve our neighbors in response to our faith in Christ's call to love one another.

2. Synod of the Sun

The Synod is a network of Presbyterians within the four states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. As part of its overall mission, the Synod desires to support and promote SUS as a covenant partner by:

- A. Supporting: Providing support for SUS, through appointing a representative to the SUS board of directors in order to foster the existence and growth of SUS and its programs.
- B. Promoting: Share the mission and program of SUS with the churches and partners of the Synod and encourage participation and financial support by all the presbyteries and churches within the Synod.
- C. Advising: Providing input, advice, and direction as needed from time to time, in order to further the mission, goals, and programs of SUS, and to improve the effectiveness of SUS' programs and activities.

This covenant is to be approved by SUS and the Synod and is to be reviewed and renewed every 3 years by each body. Each body shall keep an original copy of the covenant.

Solar Under the Sun

6400 Richard B. Hardie Drive

Little Rock, AR 72207

Email: info@solarunderthesun.org

Website: solarunderthesun.org

Synod of the Sun

6100 Colwell Blvd., Ste. 200

Irving, TX 75039

Email: synod.leader@synodsun.org

Website: synodsun.org

From **Presbyterians do Mission in Partnership**

A policy statement from the 215th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA):

“The discipline of partnership assumes that mission can best be done by joining hands with those who share a common vision. Partnership in mission involves two or more organizations who agree to submit themselves to a common task or goal, mutually giving and receiving and surrounded by prayers so that God’s word can be more faithfully accomplished. Theologically and biblically, partnership is based on the fundamental belief that God’s love for the world is greater than any one church can possibly comprehend or realize.”