



Dear Colleagues,

The 226th General Assembly met this summer, first in committees that gathered online, and then all together for several days of plenary sessions at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City. National Capital Presbytery was represented by our commissioners, Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon, Elder Lou Durden (Northminster), Elder Mark Eakin (Warner Memorial), Elder Jesy Littlejohn (Oaklands), Rev. Dean McDonald, Rev. Bernice Parker-Jones; and by Young Adult Advisory Delegate Jackie Hager (Lewinsville).

The 226th General Assembly:

- **Met in person** in plenary for the first time since the 223rd General Assembly in 2018.
- **Elected the Rev. CeCe Armstrong, of Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery, and the Rev. Tony Larson, of New Harmony Presbytery, as co-moderators.** With the assembly's adoption of new Standing Rules, under which moderators will be elected at the *end* of each biennial meeting instead of the beginning, these co-moderators will have the unique privilege of presiding over two successive General Assemblies before installing their successors.
- Approved a budget that includes **per capita rates of \$10.84 for 2025 and \$11.26 for 2026.** (The total per capita assessment for members of NCP congregations will be the sum of the rates for General Assembly, the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, and National Capital Presbytery.)
- **Responded to overtures with which NCP concurred:**
 - POL-02: On Amending D-7.0501 Regarding Minors and Vulnerable Adults
The assembly approved an amendment to the Church Discipline section of the Book of Order that reminds clerks of session or presbytery stated clerks of their obligation to report to civil authorities any knowledge of harm or risk of harm to vulnerable persons, when they receive a disciplinary accusation. If also approved by a majority of presbyteries, the amendment will be included in the next edition of the Book of Order.
 - ENV-02: On Removal of Investments In and Subsidies for Fossil Fuels
The assembly initially acted to approve the recommendation, and then upon reconsideration acted to disapprove it. While many commissioners emphasized the urgency of the climate crisis, others expressed concerns about divestment affecting the ability of the Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investing (MRTI) to continue ongoing advocacy work with fossil fuel companies.
 - ENV-03: On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution
The assembly voted to approve the recommendation, encouraging Presbyterians to

work to eliminate single-use plastics, and commending a number of resources to the church.

- Acted on many **other items of business**, including these two, which touch on the life of our presbytery and its congregations:

- POL-01: On Amending the Book of Order to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Among the Categories Against Which This Church Does Not Discriminate

The assembly approved two amendments to the Book of Order:

1. Adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the language describing the diversity of persons united in Christ through baptism in the Foundations section's provision on "Unity in Diversity" (F-1.0403).
2. Adding two new requirements to the provision on the examination of church officers (that is, elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament) in G-2.0104b. The new language would require an examination to cover "the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01)," as well as the "principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403."

The presbyteries will now have the opportunity to vote on each of these proposed amendments. If approved by a majority of the presbyteries, they will be included in the next edition of the Book of Order.

- POL-13: Request for Authoritative Interpretation on Celebrating the Lord's Supper within an Electronic Worship Service

The assembly approved an authoritative interpretation of the PCUSA Constitution stating that it is appropriate to celebrate the Lord's Supper through electronic means, also referring the matter to the Office of Theology and Worship to develop a fuller authorized interpretation for presentation to the next General Assembly.

I can attest that our commissioners carried out their work with openness, creativity, thoughtfulness, and good humor! They now will serve as members of the presbytery's Bills and Overtures Committee, helping to interpret the work of the General Assembly and to present the proposed amendments to the Book of Order for action by this presbytery.

Thank you for your prayers for all who participated in this year's General Assembly—for their safe travels, and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their discernment. I feel blessed to have been able to join with this body in worship, to hear their deliberations, and to pray with and for them through the course of their work.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk