



Synod Meeting Summary

2024
April 28–30

2115 Cliff Drive
Eagan, MN 55122

Next Synod Meeting
October 6-7, 2024
Virtual

The Annual Meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies was held on April 28 to 30, 2024, at Mount Olivet Conference and Retreat Center. Corresponding members present: **Kyle Nolan**, Presbyterian Foundation, **Jim Hinton**, New Covenant Trust, **John Wilkinson**, PMA, **Ken Green**, Board of Pensions, **Doodle Harris**, Hastings College, **Erin Anderson**, Clearwater Forest, **Emily Meyer**, Ministry Lab, and **Crystal Boyd**, Hennepin History Museum.

An orientation to synod meetings was held for new commissioners and anyone interested.

Jeff Dickinson, Ruling Elder (RE) from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, and **Lisa Johnson**, Teaching Elder (TE) from the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Moderator and Vice-Moderator, respectively, led the meeting.



Rev. **Kyle Nolan**, Ministry Relations Office for the Upper Midwest from the Presbyterian Foundation. Presentation is available to [view by clicking here](#).

On Sunday evening **Crystal Boyd**, Hennepin History Museum Advisor, and members of Valley Community Presbyterian Church, Golden Valley, MN, gave a presentation on the Haha Wakpandan/Bassett Creek Oral History Project and how it developed, beginning with their land acknowledgment and commitment to learn more. The synod's October 2023 meeting focused on the sacredness of this region and water for indigenous people. This congregational project illustrated the power of stories and partnering with our neighbors to support Indigenous priorities. [View Haha Wakpandan/Bassett Creek Oral History Project here](#).

On Sunday evening **Scott Prouty**, TE, Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, lead the commissioners and guests in a group building session followed by a game of trivia on the synod and the denomination.



Reports

On Monday morning the Synod approved the report of the Steering Committee.

The Synod approved three overtures to General Assembly. We voted to concur with an overture from the Synod of the Northeast on Creating at GA Commission on Mid-Councils. We approved our synod overture regarding the synod's boundaries as well as an overture regarding the increases in medical costs for 48% of pastoral leaders who cover a spouse, children, or both. The later overture, passed unanimously, states: **The Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the PC(USA) overtures the General Assembly to work with the Board of Pensions to ensure adjustments are made to medical dues plans for Pastors and Spouse or Families eliminating the undue burden on small congregations and ensuring the affordability of medical coverage for pastoral leaders needing family coverage in 2026 and beyond.** To see the final version of the synod's overtures sent to General Assembly, [click here](#).

Pamela Prouty, Stated Clerk, and **Deb DeMeester**, Director for Leadership Development, led the assembly in Boundary Training as required by G-3.0106 of the Book of Order. Two videos, developed by the Synod, were used as well as a review and critique of the current Synod policies. These videos are available to be used by the synod's congregations and presbyteries. [Click here for the videos](#).

In the afternoon time was spent exploring four potential priorities for the next five years – continuing and updating the three current priorities and adding a fourth. Commissioners were asked to relate these priorities to the work and ministry of their presbyteries and the

Matthew 25 Initiative as well as reflect on what other stakeholders should be involved in this strategic planning process.

Elona Street -Stewart discussed ways the Matthew 25 Initiative is taking root and reenergizing ministry around the synod. She also shared the following videos from two Iowa congregations in the synod:

[Welcome Home Center](#); [Poverty & Vitality: Mt. Pleasant Iowa](#); [First PC, Bellevue Community Cupboard Project](#).



John Wilkinson, Director of Ministry Engagement and Support for the General Assembly, addressed the assembly on Sunday evening. Wilkinson noted trends in the denomination as well as ways Presbyterians are making a difference in the lives of members and beyond the walls of their churches. He informed us of the upcoming change from four special offerings (Pentecost, One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy) to three. He affirmed how beneficial the One Great Hour of Sharing offering has been for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Self-Development of People, and our hunger programs. On Monday evening he preached during worship. For more on the [change to Special Offerings click here](#).

Committee Highlights

Communications Committee

- There will be a Synod Sunday in September 2024 for which a short video and bulletin insert will be shared with all congregations.

Finance Committee

- The Treasurer reported that in 2023 the Synod provided services and support to presbyteries, churches, camps, and regional and national missions at a rate of \$1.06 per dollar received in per capita. The synod approved per capita at \$5.50, maintaining the same amount since 2020.

Personnel Committee

- The committee is working on clarifying personnel policies.

Committee on Racial Equity Ministries

- CREM celebrated their name change (Ethnic was replaced with Equity) as well as \$17,000 of scholarships given to students of color and American Indian students within the bounds of the Synod.

Strategic Service and Witness Committee

- In addition to continuing support of tribal colleges and institutional partners, the SSW agreed to make a one-time grant to Restorative Actions to cover administrative/project staffing expenses to launch the trusts for Afro-American Individuals and Communities and Indigenous Individuals and Communities.

Transforming Communities/Vital Leadership Committee

- The TCVL committee announced its sponsorship of a Sankofa Pilgrimage: Learning from the Past to Create a Better Future to Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama on October 16-20, 2024.

In addition to these six standing committees, the 2023 Committee on Representation report to GA was approved. Additional reports were received from staff members, Committee on Self-Development of People, Clearwater Forest, Hastings College, Synod School Committee, Restorative Actions, Presbyterian Women and **Carolyn Grice**, TE, Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, on her experience at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.



Carolyn Grice



Synod choir at worship on Monday



Synod Assembly