

Mission Presbytery Stated and Annual Meeting  
October 17-18, 2025  
Cross Roads, Windcrest

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 4:00 PM**

Moderator Dan Milford called the stated and annual presbytery meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He reminded the presbytery about our mission statement:

*As Mission Presbytery, we connect diverse leaders and congregations by providing opportunities for worship, learning, and service so that we can flourish through God's grace.*  
He opened the meeting with prayer.

**Land Acknowledgment**

We take time at the beginning of our meetings to offer a brief land acknowledgment to the indigenous people who came before us. We acknowledge that Bexar County was inhabited for over 14,000 years by Native American people who left their marks—stories on rocks, codes for storytelling, and timekeeping. We remember the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation, particularly the Payaya people, as the first inhabitants. The Lipan Apaches and the Comanche lived here in the 1700s and were hunter-gatherers. Today, the Lipan Apache continue to live in Texas, speaking their traditional languages and enacting their customs. We acknowledge that despite the repeated attempts at genocide, they still number around 4,500 (with over 30,000 total indigenous people) in San Antonio, Texas, and continue to contribute to the development of this community in all its industries, the arts, civil and military service, and individual communities of purpose. (compiled resources)

Dan announced that an addendum packet was sent yesterday, including updates to reports and the docket. **Dan asked if there was a motion to approve the updated docket. A motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.**

Dan asked first-time presbytery commissioners to introduce themselves by saying their names and the churches they represent.

**A motion was made to give RE Fred Gamble, member of Mission Presbytery, who will present the General Council report on Saturday morning, voice but no vote during this stated and annual meeting. There was a second. No discussion. The motion was approved.**

Dan introduced Corresponding Members:

- ❖ Rev. Mitch Miller, Synod of the Sun Leader and Stated Clerk
- ❖ Rev. Joan Wilson, Shenandoah Presbytery in Virginia

**A motion was made and seconded to give our corresponding members voice but no vote during this stated and annual presbytery meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.**

Dan reviewed with the presbytery how we'll comport ourselves for the meeting.

- When you wish to speak, go to the mic in the aisle. Do not yell from your seat.

- Wait for the Moderator to acknowledge you, and then address the Moderator as you speak.
- If you want to amend any motion, you must write it and give it to Laurie Palmer, the Stated Clerk.

Rev. Brian Diebold welcomed Mission Presbytery to Cross Roads.

Transitional General Presbyter Report, Bobby Musengwa, gave his report as follows:

Matthew 25 Presbytery: A Call to Faithful Witness

Mr. Moderator, Madam Stated Clerk, Distinguished Guests, Commissioners, Brothers and Sisters, Friends, I stand before you today to declare that the state of Mission Presbytery is solid. Despite all the challenges and opportunities we face in our various congregations, Mission Presbytery stands on solid rock. We are strong and vulnerable at the same time, yet because we stand on Christ, the solid rock, "all other ground is sinking sand."

I stand before you today to remind us of who we are and whose we are.

We at Mission Presbytery are the Matthew 25 Presbytery.

And our guiding principle - our North Star, our compass in every decision we make - is not a strategy, not a program, not even our own well-intentioned plans that we have been working hard on. It is Jesus Christ. Our Risen Lord. He is our foundation. He is our hope. So let me ask you plainly: **What would Jesus do?** Would he love his neighbor? Not with comfortable words offered from a distance, but with radical, scandalous, transformative love? Yes. A thousand times, yes. He taught us to do likewise.

Would he care for the sick? Would he enter into the rooms where pain lives?

Would he touch the untouchable and heal the broken-hearted? Would he see human suffering and respond with his whole being? Yes. And he calls us to do likewise.

**Would he welcome the stranger in our midst?**

Think of that word: *welcome*. Not tolerate. Not manage. Not minimize. But welcome - as you would welcome a member of your own family. Scripture has taught us this. Jesus lived this. He invited Gentiles and Samaritans and tax collectors and those deemed unclean by the powerful to his table. He broke bread with them. He ate with them. He called them beloved.

**Would he welcome the outcasts?**

The ones the powerful seek to push to the margins? The ones society has deemed disposable? The ones we might pass by on the other side? Jesus didn't pass by. He stopped. He saw them. He called them by name. He restored their dignity. He declared them worthy of his love and attention.

And he would do it again. He *is* doing it again. Every time we encounter the forgotten, the suffering, the stranger - Christ is present, asking us: Will you see me? Will you welcome me? Will you love me?

**This is what Jesus would do.**

And now I say to you, as he said to his disciples: **Go and do likewise.**

That is not a suggestion. That is not a nice sentiment for us to appreciate and then file away. That is a command. That is our mission. That is our calling.

But I know what you're thinking. The challenges are real. The obstacles are steep. The opportunities are daunting. The world seems darker by the day.

Where is our strength? Where is our hope?

Let me tell you something, and I want you to hear this in the depths of your souls:

**Despite all the challenges and opportunities we face, I declare to you that the state of Mission Presbytery is on solid rock.**

Not on sand. Not on our own cleverness, resources, or programs. But on a rock that will not be moved. That rock is Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. He would not let your foot be moved. When the storms come - and we have seen them come - you will not stumble. Mission Presbytery rose to the challenge, gave generously, and stood with our siblings in the Hill Country. When the pressures mount, when the questions grow harder, when the night seems long, you will stand. Why? Because you are not standing alone. He who looks after Mission Presbytery neither slumbers nor sleeps. There is a Good Shepherd who watches over this flock. His name is Jesus Christ our Lord. While you rest, he keeps watch. While you work, he strengthens. While you faithfully follow, he leads. He will not abandon you. He will not leave

you as orphans. He will not forget the promises he has made to those who follow him in love and justice and radical welcome. So this is my call to you, as we move forward into whatever challenges await us: Measure every decision against the example of Jesus.

Ask yourself: Is this what Jesus would do? Is this what love demands? Is this what justice requires? Is this what hospitality commands? When you're tempted to turn away, remember: Jesus stopped. He saw. He welcomed. When you're tempted to doubt, remember: You stand on the rock that cannot be shaken.

When you're tempted to believe that your efforts don't matter, remember: The Good Shepherd tends his flock. You are not alone in this work. And when you're ready to go back out into the world - to your communities, to your congregations, to the people God has placed in your care - go with courage. Go with conviction. And as the song says,

*Go and Lift every voice and sing, 'Til earth and heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;*

*Go and Let our rejoicing rise High as the listening skies, Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

Go knowing that Jesus Christ walks with you. **Go and do likewise.** Amen.

Stated Clerk, Laurie Palmer, gave her report.

**The Stated Clerk moved to approve the excused absences for this meeting. There was a second, and no discussion. The motion was approved.**

Churches that have had their 2024 session minutes reviewed:

Covenant, San Antonio; Cross Roads, Windcrest; Divine Redeemer, San Antonio; Dripping Springs, Dripping Springs; FPC: Austin, Beeville, Brownsville, Collegeport, Copperas Cove, Georgetown, Giddings, Karnes City, Kerrville, Lampasas, Lockhart, Mercedes, New Braunfels, Pleasanton, Rockport, Victoria; Grace, San Antonio; Island, Corpus Christi; Leander, Leander; Los Angeles Heights, San Antonio; New Braunfels, New Braunfels (2021-2024); Oak Hills, San Antonio; Pipe Creek, Pipe Creek; Round Rock, Round Rock; San Gabriel, Georgetown; San Pedro, San Antonio (2023); St. Andrew, Marble Falls; St. Andrew, San Antonio; St. Mark, Boerne; Shepherd of the Hills, Austin; The Presbyterian Church of Gonzales, Gonzales; The Presbyterian Church of Lake Travis, Austin; Tivoli, Tivoli; University, San Antonio; Wimberley, Wimberley

Fiscal Oversight Committee: Sandy Nicholson

Sandy lifted the 2026 Mission Presbytery budget, which General Council approved on September 20, 2025. One of the reports in the packet is benevolence giving by the churches of Mission Presbytery. We use reserve funds to support the budget.

Sandy reminded us of the importance of churches in supporting the life of the presbytery through benevolence giving. We are at 55% for the year, and well behind where we should be. Mission Presbytery has sent two letters to our churches this fall: one for Per Capita and the other for church benevolence giving.

Presbyterian Women: Lori Black, Liz Anzaldúa

One of the main things I love about Presbyterian Women is the strong sense of mission we all share. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us that each of us should use whatever gifts we have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in many ways.

Our PW members have actively sought methods to address food insecurity within their communities, supported initiatives related to permanent, temporary, and transitional housing, and helped with programs for children and teens. Additionally, they assist PDA by assembling cleanup buckets and hygiene kits for

individuals affected by natural disasters, purchasing projects from the Presbyterian Giving Catalog, and participating in hands-on craft activities.

Lori shared specific projects:

- ❖ Grace Garden, New Braunfels PC: This is the second year of the garden. So far in 2025, over 800 pounds of produce have been donated to the local food bank. Although it is a church mission project, Grace Garden has been planted, maintained, and harvested primarily by PW volunteers who have learned a lot about gardening in the Texas heat.
- ❖ In response to the Hill Country floods in July, several New Braunfels, NB, PWs and friends went to Kerrville to prepare meals with Mercy Chefs. They plan to return.
- ❖ Burnet PWs send Project Cure in Houston men's shirts repurposed into hospital gowns, baby shirts, and hats. They are shipped to third-world countries. Lori called attention to a picture on the screen of Lynne Marie, who sewed for years, only retiring after her 100th birthday. She will be 103 in December.  
Burnet PWs have participated in the Mother Bear Project, which sent crocheted and knitted bears to children in Africa. MBP closed, so they sent the bears through Project Cure.  
Their new project is to provide lunch for a Grandparent Support Group sponsored by the Burnet ISD. Many grandparents and great-grandparents are raising little ones in Burnet. This support group is a God-send as they navigate the new norm in their lives.
- ❖ The Wimberley PWs support PCHAS and the Wimberley Barnabas Christmas Store, which provides a low-cost shopping experience for parents and families in December.
- ❖ Some PWs in Rockport have a Prayer Quilt Ministry, while others work in Castaways Thrift Shop and The Community Table.  
Castaways Thrift Shop was founded in 1976. Rockport PWs work on Mondays to sell, receive, sort, and price goods. The Community Table is not a soup kitchen. A meal is served every Tuesday, and anyone is welcome. The Prayer Quilt ministry began in 2000. They distribute 10-20 quilts a month. **You cannot buy a quilt—all you have to do is ask.**
- ❖ Northwood PWs support the local elementary school and their own Prayer Shawl Ministry. They host a Shoe Drive Ministry for students in need. Charm, the therapy dog at Northwood Elementary School, sports a scarf in school colors made by the PSM. They also make "cuddle buddies" and blankets to give away.
- ❖ UPC, SA, also has a Prayer Shawl Ministry. They give them away to those who struggle and need prayers.
- ❖ Monthly, the Victoria PWs select a non-profit organization to support, September-May. Recipients of their ministry are Affectionate Arms Adult Care, Perpetual Help Home, their Presbyterian Day School, and Angel Tree.
- ❖ The PWs of El Divino Salvador, Corpus Christi, through a Better Together Grant, began an Annual Back-to-School Event in 2021, and it's been strong ever since. This summer they served 160 children with a new pair of shoes and a backpack full of school supplies.

We are better together!

PW is blessed to receive money each year from Mission Presbytery. We use this to help defray the Spring Gathering registration fee. Up to four women in each church may be awarded a scholarship — two young women (ages 15-25) and two older women (ages 26+).

Liz announced that the Spring Gathering at Mo Ranch will be on March 6-8, 2026. Rev. Kathy Anderson will keynote. The Rockport and El Divino Salvador Presbyterian Women are hosting the event. "Come to the Water." Liz encouraged the gathered to send their women. Registration is available online and in the packet for this meeting. Participants can make room reservations at Mo Ranch now by calling or booking online. The code to get pricing for the PWSG is 3709.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report: Doug Dalglish

**Motion: Approve the following to be enrolled as Inquirers:**

**Karen Jensen (University, San Antonio); Steve Yarush (Westlake Hills, Austin); Grace Asare (University, Austin); Rochelle Henderson (St. Andrew, San Antonio)**

There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

**Motion: Approve the following to be enrolled as CRE candidates:**

**Wendy Keach (Jackson Woods, CC) and Donald Anderson (FPC, Victoria)**

There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

Commission on Ministry: Jack Barden

Jack reported the new minimum terms of call.

Mission Presbytery's current minimum is \$47,500, which is the lowest in the Synod of the Sun.

Moving forward, the terms of call will be:

2026: \$50,000

2027: \$52,500

2028: \$55,000

Jack introduced two new ministers serving in Mission Presbytery, and they said a few words of greeting to the presbytery:

Adam Smith, Pastor of New Braunfels, New Braunfels

Matt Morse, Pastor of Parkway, Corpus Christi

Jack asked Josh Robinson to present the Examination report. He presented Carlos Baladez for examination for ordination to Minister of Word and Sacrament. Josh asked the first question.

The presbytery examined Carlos. When finished, Jack made the following motion:

**COM moves that Carlos Baladez's examination be sustained and he be enrolled as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament.**

There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

On behalf of the COM, Jack presented Certified Ruling Elder Karl Hays for examination as a Commissioned Pastor. He serves First, Cotulla, and First, Luling. The presbytery examined Karl. When finished, Jack made the following motion:

**COM moves that Karl Hays's examination be sustained and he be enrolled as a Commissioned Pastor for First, Cotulla, and First, Luling.**

There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**

**COM moved that Mission Presbytery elect an Administrative Commission to explore and help the ministry at Everlasting Hope, Taylor.** There was no discussion.

**The motion was approved.**

*The Commission on Ministry, in its capacity as a commission of Mission Presbytery, has taken the following actions since those reported at the last Presbytery Meeting:*

The 2025 Terms of Call/Contracts spreadsheet is a separate document in the presbytery packet. The COM approves terms of call and contracts. This is information for the presbytery.

2026 Minimum Terms of Call (10/6/25)

The 2025 minimum terms of call are \$47,500.

A motion was made and seconded to increase the minimum terms of call for pastors as follows:

2026: \$50,000

2027: \$52,500

2028: \$55,000

The motion was approved.

As Pastor Nominating Committees negotiate with candidates in Austin, San Antonio, and the surrounding areas, please note that the cost of living is higher there than in most of the rest of the presbytery.

#### Examinations Committee

- Sustained the examination of Carlos Baladez and scheduled him for examination on the floor of presbytery at the October 17-18, 2025, meeting. The motion was approved. (10/6/25)
- Sustained the examination of Libby Janes. She will be examined on the floor of the presbytery once she receives a call. The motion was approved. (10/6/25)
- Sustained the examination of Rev. Matt Morse. He will serve Parkway, CC. (8/4/25)
- Sustained the examination of Allen Roberts for ordination. Allen was examined at the June 20-21, 2025, presbytery meeting. (8/4/25)

#### Specialized Ministries Team

- Validated the position of Independent Living Director for Morningside, Menger Springs. Patrick Dennis will assume this position soon. He has been serving as Chaplain at Morningside, and will continue to participate in worship and serve the sacraments. (10/6/25)
- Validated the position of Chaplain for Morningside, Menger Springs. (8/4/25)

#### Permission to labor outside the bounds of Mission Presbytery

- Amy Meyer, to keynote a pastors' retreat and serve Communion in Sierra Blanca Presbytery on October 13-15, 2025. (10/6/25)
- John Leedy to serve as part-time Executive Director of kin\*dom community, Grace Presbytery (10/6/25)
- Randy McGrady-Beach, John Knox PC, Dublin, CA, for a baptism; San Francisco Presbytery (8/4/25)

#### Transfer Ministers

- Thomas Daniel to Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians (ECO), Highland Park PC, Dallas (10/6/25)
- John Roberts to New Covenant Presbytery, Heritage PC (10/6/25)
- Marsha Brown to Grace Presbytery (8/4/25)
- Carol Rahn to Twin Cities Presbytery (8/4/25)
- Matt Morse from New Covenant Presbytery (8/4/25)

#### Approve and dismiss an Administrative Commission for ordination

Ordination of Allen Roberts on September 14, University, Austin

RE Amy Toulouse, University, Austin; RE Rita Livingston, Central, Austin; RE Gary Mathews, APTS; TE Laurie Palmer, moderate the commission, ask the constitutional questions of the candidate; TE Matt Gaventa, to charge the pastor; TE Bobby Musengwa, installation prayer

Guests of the AC: TE Margaret Aymer, preach; TE Fred Morgan, charge to the pastor; TE Ted Wardlaw; TE Consuelo Donahue, to charge the congregation (10/6/25)

#### Connect Committee: Jo Ann Currie, Emily Owen, Henry Owen, Erica Knisely

Jo Ann spoke about the book tables in the display area. You may donate a book, puzzles, or videos, and they are free for presbyters to pick up at the meetings. There are handouts on how our churches can use literature in our ministries.

Emily and Henry Owen: Small church retreats in 2026, Austin College Activators will lead.

Individuals and families are invited. Scholarship funds are available. (Look at the flyer in the

packet)

Erica: \$1,000 regional grants are available for you to use to connect.

#### Learn Committee, Tom Tickner

The purpose of Learn is to develop, strengthen, and equip leaders to nurture the faith of all ages to grow in their discipleship of Jesus Christ through storytelling, listening, trust building, and more. Learn resources are in the report and on the Mission Presbytery website. Hallie Spence offered a pre-presbytery workshop today on faith development and nurture in families.

Brian Diebold gave directions for dinner. He asked Bobby to say grace for the meal while we were gathered in the sanctuary. Cross Roads provided a BBQ dinner to Mission Presbytery and guests.

The meeting recessed until 9:00 a.m. Saturday.

#### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 9:00 AM**

Dan called the meeting back to order with worship. Rev. Elizabeth Pang preached. Rev. Brian Diebold and Rev. Elizabeth Pang officiated communion. The offering was designated by FPC, Kerrville, and Mo-Ranch, Hunt, for flood relief efforts.

Mission Presbytery took a break.

#### General Council Report, Fred Gamble

- ❖ **Motion: The General Council, via the Human Resources Committee, moves the approval of another five-year term for the Stated Clerk, Laurie Palmer.** There was no discussion. **The motion was approved.**
  
- ❖ **Fred announced that Faith, Austin, has sent an overture to Mission Presbytery for consideration to send to the General Assembly for its meeting in the summer of 2026.**  
**He moved that we approve sending the overture to General Assembly.**  
Marilyn White, a Ruling Elder from Faith, Austin, is the advocate for this overture. She gave the rationale for it.

#### Overture:

##### **On Seeking God's Peace Through Nuclear Disarmament in the 21st Century Recommendation**

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Reaffirm the action of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), which called upon all members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to take actions in defense of God's creation by working for nuclear disarmament; and acknowledging in particular the admonition to "find new peace strategies", call upon all members to carefully and prayerfully examine whether our current policies toward nuclear weapons are realistic.
2. Call on every congregation to commit to a year of study of three questions about nuclear weapons:
  - a) What, objectively, is the level of risk involved in relying on nuclear deterrence for safety?
  - b) What, realistically, is the practical military utility of nuclear weapons, and
  - c) Is there a mythology wrapped around these weapons that falsely attributes god-like power to them?
3. Provide materials to make an in-depth and serious study of these topics possible.
4. Call on our national leaders to take immediate action — not to disarm unilaterally, but rather to assume the leadership of a worldwide effort to re-examine nuclear weapons realistically and begin a process of mutual disarmament.

#### **Rationale**

Unfortunately, most of what we think we know about nuclear weapons is a mixture of awe and exaggeration. Nuclear weapons did not “shock” Japan into surrendering; nuclear weapons are not the “ultimate” weapon, either on the battlefield or in long-range attacks on adversaries; and nuclear deterrence is not safe over the long run.

Their destructiveness is, however, entirely real. A single large nuclear weapon could leave a city in ruins and kill hundreds of thousands of its people.<sup>1</sup> A nuclear war would devastate the northern hemisphere and kill hundreds of millions of people.<sup>2</sup> However, the common exaggeration that nuclear war would “destroy all life on earth” is doubtful, if for no other reason than that 800 million people are living in the Southern Hemisphere, where there are no nuclear weapons.

In the anxiety, fear, and even paranoia of the Cold War, a kind of mythology was wrapped around nuclear weapons — a mythology that continues to warp perceptions and obscure their reality to this day. We know Japan surrendered because the Soviet Union came into the war, not because of the atomic bombings. We know it because that’s what Japan’s leaders said they would do. In June of 1945 the Supreme Council — the ruling body of Japan at the time — agreed that if the Russians came into the war, they would have to surrender.<sup>3</sup> And when the Russians came into the war two months later, Japan’s leaders agreed to surrender in less than 27 hours.

We know that bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki didn’t force Japan to surrender because Japan’s leaders didn’t care about city bombing. Japan’s Supreme Council never discussed the massive campaign of city bombing that the United States inflicted on it during the summer of 1945. After the war, Navy Chief of Staff Toyoda Soemu said, “I do not believe that the question of air raids came up in the minds . . . [of the Supreme Council] . . . at all; that is, there was no idea that we must surrender to avoid even a single additional day of bombing.”<sup>4</sup> We know that nuclear weapons are not useful on the battlefield because the United States government has told us so. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush decided to unilaterally retire all but a symbolic handful of the U.S.’s battlefield nuclear weapons. And he did it with the support of the military.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, after years of careful study, U.S. political and military leaders became convinced that battlefield nuclear weapons had so little utility that they could safely be scrapped — whether anyone else scrapped theirs or not.

Nuclear explosions are so large that if you use one against your adversary’s front-line troops, you end up killing some of your own troops. And the lethal radiation that the weapons release can be blown by the wind up to 25 miles in an hour, making it difficult to attack anything anywhere near the front lines.<sup>6</sup> We know that using nuclear weapons for long-range wars is suicidal because no less an authority than President Ronald Reagan said it is. Reagan famously said, “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”<sup>7</sup> If you fight a war with nuclear weapons, after the war ends, your country will be crippled, starving, poisoned, and no longer in control of its own destiny.

We know that nuclear deterrence will inevitably lead to catastrophe over the long run. The problem is that nuclear deterrence, by its very nature, has to be perfect. Even a single failure could end up in a devastating war. This requirement, however, creates an insurmountable problem because all human beings are fallible. We all make mistakes. None of us can be perfect. And human beings are intimately involved in nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence is a back-and-forth process of threat and counter-threat that is entirely governed by human beings. Which means that if human beings are prone to folly — and we are; and if human beings are involved with nuclear deterrence — and we manage every step; then nuclear deterrence is, by definition, inherently flawed. It will fail. It cannot be perfect forever. Eventually, our luck will run out, and one of those failures will end in catastrophe. It’s not a question of if; it’s just a matter of when.

How did these exaggerations come to be? The mythology was born on a windy night high on the empty



plains of the American Southwest. When he watched the first atomic explosion, J. Robert Oppenheimer claimed that the words from the sacred Hindu text, the Bhagavad Gita, suddenly came into his head: "Now I am Become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds." Another observer described it as: "A great blinding light . . . as if God himself had appeared among us. Then an explosion [like] a vision from the Book of Revelation." <sup>8</sup> Someone else told of the awesome roar "which warned of Doomsday and made us feel we were blasphemous to dare tamper with the forces heretofore reserved to the Almighty."<sup>9</sup> "God himself," "Book of Revelation," "Doomsday," "Almighty" — the subtext of these words is rarely remarked on but is unmistakable: nuclear weapons have god-like power ("Destroyer of Worlds") and they confer that power onto their possessors ("Now *I am become* Death, . . .").

And to this day, we talk about nuclear weapons in tones touched with awe and fear. We call them the "ultimate" or "absolute" weapon — as if no other weapon could ever surpass them. We use "Apocalypse" (a final battle between gods and monsters at the end of the world) and "Armageddon" (the location in the Bible of Last Battle at the End of Days) as synonyms for nuclear war. We say nuclear weapons will always exist as if they weren't technology at all, but some sort of eternal and everlasting deity. And we capitalize "the Bomb" the same way we capitalize only one other word — God. Our talk reveals our beliefs. Nuclear weapons have been wrapped in a god-like mythology since the first moment of their existence. Their destructiveness is inarguable. But their military utility and consequently their importance in international relations have both been so exaggerated that policy makers have come to believe that nuclear weapons confer unimaginable power on their possessors.

The belief in the god-like power of nuclear weapons is vitally important because that myth is all that is holding us back from eliminating nuclear weapons. Weapons that are very dangerous and virtually useless get abandoned. This is why chemical and biological weapons have been successfully banned. The treaties eliminating these weapons work because it is obvious that both types of weapons are very dangerous and, as a practical matter, very difficult to use in war.

If we could remove the mythology wrapped around nuclear weapons, the same would obviously be true about them — they are extremely dangerous, they are virtually unusable on the battlefield, they are suicidal to fight long-range wars with, and nuclear deterrence will inevitably fail over the long run. "Dangerous and virtually useless" is a common-sense formula for abandoning technology. This is the key to eliminating nuclear weapons. <sup>10</sup>

We are called to dispel the deadly and dangerous mythology that enshrouds nuclear weapons. Our faith demands it. It is imperative for us because the belief that nuclear weapons have god-like power violates the most fundamental teaching of what we believe. The very first commandment in the Old Testament says, "I am the Lord your God. . . . You shall have no other gods before me." Surah 163 of the Quran says, "And your Allah is One Allah: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." In First Corinthians 8, Paul tells us: "There is no God but the one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth . . . yet for us there is but one God."

The floor was open for discussion. After discussion, Dan called for the vote. **The motion was approved.**

As information, the General Council approved the following minutes at its September 20, 2025, stated meeting:

- General Council, January 11, 2025, stated meeting
- General Council, March 1, 2025, called meeting to approve the contract for the Transitional General Presbyter candidate, Rev. Bobby Musengwa
- Mission Presbytery stated meeting, March 7-8, 2025
- General Council, May 3, 2025, stated meeting
- Mission Presbytery stated meeting, June 20-21, 2025

Committee on Representation and Participation, Walt Lee

**Walt moved the slate of nominees from CORP.**

After he made the motion, Dan asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There was one nomination from the floor, RE Wendy Keach, Corpus Christi, for General Assembly Commissioner. There was no discussion. **The motion with the addition of Wendy Keach as GA Commissioner was approved.**

“vacant”= one vacancy

**COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (COM)**

Class of 2028	Class of 2027	Class of 2026
TE Jon Watt	<b>vacant</b>	<b>two vacancies</b>
TE Gini Norris-Lane		
TE Cheryl Homsher		
TE Kurt Simon		
TE Dave Dierksen		
TE John Brantley		
RE Steve Frazier		
RE Marie Baker		

**two vacancies**

**TRUSTEES (COMMISSION)**

Class of 2030  
TE Amy Meyer  
RE Bonnie Wilkinson

**PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

Class of 2029, **vacant**      Class of 2031, **three vacancies**

**COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION (CORP)**

Class of 2026	Class of 2028
RE Judy Ferguson	RE Susan Penrod
	TE Michelle Veters

**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (CPM)**

Class of 2026	Class of 2028
RE Bill Wilkinson	RE Martha Sherrod
	TE Jim Rigby
	TE Margaret Aymer
	TE Mike Murray

**CONNECT COMMITTEE**

Class of 2027	Class of 2028
TE Lora East	RE Jo Ann Currie
RE Liz Anzaldua	RE Grace Bradshaw

**FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Class of 2028  
RE Scott Johnson  
RE Lisa Sandlin

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Class of 2027    **vacant**  
Class of 2028    **vacant**

**JOHN KNOX RANCH COMMITTEE**

Class of 2028  
TE Nancy McCranie

RE Bob Anderson

vacant

### **LEARN COMMITTEE**

Class of 2028

TE Ann Brizendine

RE Hallie Spence

### **SERVE COMMITTEE**

Class of 2028    two vacancies

**Mission Presbytery Treasurer**

**MP Assistant Treasurer**

**Moderator-elect**

**TE Leslie Ellison**

**RE Sandy Nicholson**

**RE Gordon Ringler**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS 2026**

June 22-23

Committees meet online

June 28-July 2

In-person plenary meeting in Milwaukee, WI

Young Adult Advisory Delegate

vacant

Ruling Elders

Teaching Elders

Caitlin Supcoff

Gini Norris-Lane

Wendy Keach

Josh Robinson

vacant

vacant

Synod of the Sun Leader and Stated Clerk: Mitch Miller

Every presbytery in Synod has signed the Synod Partnership for Disaster Assistance. Kathy Lee Cornel, who recently served as Director of The Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR), is now the PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's Associate for National Disaster Response. The search committee will soon announce a candidate for the position. Mitch reminded Mission Presbytery that "All the best ministry happens in the interruptions." What do you think God is capable of? He recapped some of the Synod's ministries.

Youth Connection, Caitlin Supcoff

Mission Presbytery sent 25 youth and six adults to Youth Triennium in Louisville, Kentucky, in July.

Main Event was on September 26-28, at John Knox Ranch. 85 youth and adult leaders attended, which is 25-40 more than in 2024. The theme was "Out of Chaos, Hope." The gathered put together 42 disaster clean-up buckets. They were able to do this because the June 2025 presbytery meeting offering was designated for youth mission events.

Mid-Winter is set for January 16-18, 2026, at Mo-Ranch. Rev. Amy Meyer, FPC, Elgin, will serve as the keynote speaker.

Disaster Preparedness and Assistance, Ben Henderson

Ben gave a report on the Hill Country floods and the response from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance within the presbytery, by the Synod, and by the denomination.

John Knox Ranch, Henry Owen, Rob Mueller

❖ 935 campers attended day camp or resident camp this summer.

- ❖ 79 campers participated in Camp Braveheart. JKR partners with Hospice Austin to offer this ministry to kids who've experienced the death of a loved one.
- ❖ The State of Texas is releasing new camp regulations. JKR will update theirs in response. JKR has no cabins in the floodplain.
- ❖ JKR will begin a strategic and site master plan. Some of the things they'll look at are the long-term viability of the dining hall on the floodplain and upgrading adult facilities.
- ❖ 130 people attended the Bilingual Camp this year. It will be in September next year.

Hispanic Ministry Mission Network, Lisa Almon

Lisa has been Mission Presbytery's Synod Commissioner for the last two years. She is co-moderator of Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN). It seeks to help Hispanic churches become thriving worship and outreach communities in LA-TX-OK-AR. She gave the history of HMMN. Go to the following link to learn more about HMMN's work.

<https://www.austinseminary.edu/lifelong-learning/programas-en-espanol/hispanic-ministries-mission-network>

HMMN requested and received \$20,000 from Mission Presbytery's Administrative Commission for Congregational Vitality and Development (ACCVD) to develop websites for Hispanic churches. They are grateful for this grant.

Lisa spoke of other ministries within the HMMN. She thanked Mission Presbytery for sending her as a Synod Commissioner.

Serve Committee, Patrick Dennis

Patrick gave out the 2025 Serve Grants. The recipients were:

- Afghan Refugee Ministry (ARM), Westlake Hills, Austin, \$4,000
- Cross Roads, Windcrest, freezer/fridge for feeding program, \$800
- Faith Ministry, Mission Trip for All to Reynosa, Mexico, home building, \$5,000
- Loaves&Fishes of the RGV, Open Arms Emergency Shelter and Meal Program, \$1,000
- Oak Hills, SA, Under the Bridge, food and clothing, \$2,400
- Mo-Ranch, Camp in the Valley, \$3,400
- SA Time Dollar Community Connections, food pantry, \$1,000
- United Campus Ministry at Texas State, \$2,500; students serving after-school program, homeless shelter
- UPLift, UPC, Austin, utility bill assistance to the community, \$3,000
- University Presbyterians Living in Faith Together
- Youth Educational Support, \$1,800; FPC, Kerrville

\$2094 was collected in the morning's worship offering for flood relief efforts.

175 attended this weekend's meeting.

Dan Milford led the installation of Rev. Monica Smith as Moderator for Mission Presbytery in 2026.

Monica gave Dan a gift in recognition of his service as Moderator this year.

**Monica called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded.**

**The motion was approved.**

Monica closed the meeting with prayer.  
Minutes submitted by Laurie Palmer, Stated Clerk.