



## 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2024) Information for Mid Council Leaders Preparing the Presbytery and Participants

### Dates of the Assembly

As may know, the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2024) will be held in two main parts

1. Assembly committee meetings June 25-27, 2024, will be conducted online using Zoom and PC-Biz (the online platform for assembly business);
2. Plenary business meetings from June 29-July 4, 2024, will be held in person at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The upcoming assembly will be different from the 225<sup>th</sup> hybrid assembly where committee meetings were held in-person and plenary online, and different from traditional assemblies that were entirely in-person gatherings. We hope this information will help as you begin planning for the election of your commissioners and YAAD, as well as for your own participation.

We have created a concise [Fact Sheet](#) that provides more information about the format of the assembly. We encourage you to share it with potential commissioners and YAADs, your colleagues, and others interested in how the assembly will work.

### Summary of Action Steps

- Review the docket information and contact [GAMeetingService](#) if you have any questions.
- Pay close attention to eligibility and deadlines.
- Plan for the process of recruiting commissioners and young adult advisory delegate nominees (whether that is through a rotation system, a nominating committee, etc.).
- Schedule the election for a regular presbytery meeting so that names and required information will be reported to the Office of the General Assembly **no later than December 28, 2023**. The portal will be open in September 2023; we encourage you to report commissioner and YAAD names and information as soon as they are elected.
- If you have recommendations of commissioners who might serve well as an assembly committee leader, please submit their name(s) for the GA Co-Moderators' consideration. A form for submitting recommendations will be shared with mid council leaders in September 2023.

Any questions? Contact us at [GAMeetingService@pcusa.org](mailto:GAMeetingService@pcusa.org)

## Docket

The [proposed docket](#) provides that all assembly meetings will be held between Tuesday, June 25 and Thursday, July 4, with committees meeting online June 25-27 and in-person plenaries held in Salt Lake City June 30—July 4.

In accordance with the process outlined in the Manual of the General Assembly, Standing Rule C.2, each commissioner and advisory delegate will be randomly assigned to one assembly committee. These assignments will be made as soon as practical after early March 2024 when the GA Co-Moderators name the moderators and vice-moderators of these assembly committees.

## Assembly convenes online

The General Assembly will officially convene at 8:00 a.m. Mountain Time on Tuesday, June 25 with a brief online plenary session for the full assembly to approve the docket and other key business items before assembly committees begin their work.

The assembly committees will then begin their separate meetings using Zoom and PC-Biz, concluding by Thursday evening, June 27. Most committee members, and those presenting and resourcing the reports and recommendations being considered, will participate online. A core group of assembly committee leadership will be in Salt Lake City with a small support team.

Assembly committee meetings will be accessible to remote viewers via livestreaming.

After the conclusion of assembly committee work the assembly committee leadership teams will remain in Salt Lake City to prepare their assembly committee reports.

## Travel to Salt Lake City

Young Adult Advisory Delegates will travel to Salt Lake City on Friday, June 28 so that they may participate in a YAAD Orientation before Sunday's opening in-person plenary.

Most commissioners will travel to Salt Lake City on Saturday, June 29. The Presbytery of Utah will partner with PC(USA) agencies to sponsor a Welcome Reception on that Saturday evening. Not only will this be an opportunity to meet other attendees, but it will also be a chance to meet the candidates for moderator or co-moderators of the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Assembly attendees have been invited by local Presbyterian churches for worship and lunch on Sunday, June 30.

## Assembly reconvenes in person

The assembly will reconvene at 2:30 p.m. Mountain Time on Sunday, June 30 with a brief worship and business session followed by the election of the moderator or co-moderators of the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2024) that evening. Plenary sessions will continue Monday through Thursday to consider assembly committee reports and recommendations.

The plenary meetings will take place in the Grand Ballroom at the Salt Palace Convention Center in downtown Salt Lake City. Commissioners and advisory delegates are required to be present in person to participate in the deliberations and vote and will have assigned seating.

Corresponding members (who have voice but not vote) as well as other synod and presbytery executive staff and stated clerks may choose to be present in person or participate online. Assigned seating is available for those who register in advance and attend in-person. Plenary sessions will be available via livestreaming and accessible for those participating online.

## Assembly adjourns

The assembly will conclude by approximately 1:00 p.m. Mountain Time on Thursday, July 4. Most participants will be able to travel home on Thursday evening.

## Time Commitment

To participate fully in both the online and in-person meetings, commissioners and advisory delegates should be prepared to commit at least nine days, including travel.

During the assembly committee meetings on Tuesday, June 25 – Thursday, June 27, most commissioners and advisory delegates will participate remotely from their home, office, or another location with reliable internet service and minimal distractions.

**For the business meetings in Salt Lake City, commissioners and advisory delegates must be present in person in the plenary hall to participate. There will not be an option to join the deliberations or vote remotely.**

## Preparing for assembly committee pre-meetings and meetings

In the weeks prior to its official meetings, each assembly committee will gather online at least twice for a few hours at a time to get to know one another, practice assembly procedures, and learn more about the business they have been assigned. The introductory gathering will be held sometime between April 16 and April 26; the second will be between June 10 and June 14. These meetings will be scheduled around the availability of the assembly committee members to the extent possible.

To be fully prepared, commissioners and advisory delegates should plan to read the reports and recommendations coming to this assembly, especially those referred to their assigned assembly committee. **It is essential that all commissioners and advisory delegates come to the assembly having familiarized themselves with the relevant reports and recommendations.**

We are committed to ensuring that all committee members are equipped to access reports, participate in debate, and vote. To ensure maximum accessibility, we will be offering multiple opportunities for training on using PC-Biz and other tools that will be in use. More information on dates and times will be shared at a later date.

Some presbyteries and synods also schedule orientations and trainings for their commissioners and YAADs.

## Travel arrangements and expenses

For all commissioners and advisory delegates, the per capita assembly budget covers the cost of round-trip travel as well as hotel accommodations and meals in Salt Lake City during the in-person portion of the assembly. The Office of the General Assembly contracts with nearby hotels and works with the official PC(USA) travel agency to ensure that these arrangements are made as efficiently as possible. Details and instructions will be provided at a later time.

## Recruiting and Electing Commissioners and YAADs

As you are thinking about nominations and elections, here are expectations that you can and should share with commissioners and advisory delegates. **Please also remember to share** the concise [Fact Sheet](#) with those considering serving as commissioners and advisory delegates for a quick view of the assembly format and what to expect.

## Unity and Diversity and Participation and Representation

As you plan for the selection of the presbytery's commissioners and YAAD, please bear in mind these mandates stated in the *Book of Order*:

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction . . . The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. (F-1.0403)

And,

The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices. (G-3.0103)

## Eligibility, Representation, Nomination and Election Process

This section provides an overview of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly that cover topics such as eligibility, representation, and the nomination and election process. For the specific wording of the Standing Rules, please refer to the appendix.

## General Assembly Commissioners

- The number of commissioners a presbytery elects to attend the General Assembly is based on its number of active members, including resident clergy.
- Presbyteries must elect ruling elder and teaching elder commissioners early enough to submit their names to the Stated Clerk **no later than the 180-day deadline of December 28, 2023.**

- Please keep in mind that commissioners must attend and participate in the entire General Assembly when considering candidates for election.

### Number of commissioners each presbytery may elect

The number of commissioners that each presbytery may elect for the 226th General Assembly (2024) is determined by the presbytery membership (including teaching elders) as of December 2022.

G-3.0501: Equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elders elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

Presbytery membership as of 12/2022	# of ruling elder(s) the presbytery may elect	# of minister(s) of the Word and Sacrament the presbytery may elect
8,000 or less	1	1
8,001-16,000	2	2
16,001-24,000	3	3
24,001 -32,000	4	4

The 2022 membership figures and number of commissioners each presbytery is eligible to elect can be found in this [chart](#).

**Please note** that several presbyteries will have fewer available commissioner slots for the 2024 assembly. We encourage you to confirm the number of commissioners your presbytery is able to elect **prior** to the beginning of your nomination process.

### Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs)

Each presbytery may elect to be a Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly a young adult who will be between the ages of 18 and 23 years old on June 25, 2024 **and** who is

- an active member of one of its congregations, **or**
- a participant in a New Worshipping Community or an immigrant fellowship that has a relationship with the presbytery. [**Please note** that this is recent change in the Standing Rules to enable more opportunities for those ages 18-23 to respond to the call to serve as YAAD.]

**Presbyteries must elect Young Adult Advisory Delegates and submit their names to the Stated Clerk no later than the 180-day deadline of December 28, 2023.** An alternate may also be elected. If a presbytery fails to meet this deadline, it **cannot** send a YAAD to 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

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**Please note that by action of the 225th General Assembly (2022), the minimum age for YAADs has been raised to 18 years of age.**

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Those who are not at least 18 years old on June 25, 2024, or who reach their 24<sup>th</sup> birthday on or before that date are not eligible to serve as YAADs and will not be seated.

## Commissioners and Advisory Delegates Living with a Disability

Commissioners [and young adult and theological student advisory delegates] living with a disability who have been certified by their presbytery as requiring accommodation in order to fully participate may designate an assistant, without vote, to assist the participant in all proceedings of the General Assembly including executive sessions and committee meetings. The Stated Clerk will enroll the assistant.

The General Assembly will cover the expenses of the assistant on the same basis as the expenses for the commissioner/advisory delegate.

It is preferable for the assistant to be someone known to the commissioner (family member, friend, acquaintance, etc.).

Please contact the [GA Meeting Service](#) if the presbytery's commissioner living with a disability needs an assistant to participate in the General Assembly. The presbytery should certify the need to the Office of the General Assembly and provide the assistant's contact information.

## Commissioners and Advisory Delegates with Minor Children or Other Dependents

The [Dependent Care Reimbursement Policy for the General Assembly](#) aims to be generous and flexible by increasing the maximum reimbursement for dependent care expenses incurred during the assembly and recognizing additional categories of eligible expenses. The main part of the policy specifies that:

A commissioner or advisory delegate may include in vouchered expense the cost of dependent care under the following circumstances:

- The dependent is a child under the age of 18 or an adult dependent requiring care, and is the responsibility of the commissioner or advisory delegate;
- The care replaces that which is normally provided by the commissioner or advisory delegate or supplements care at the assembly;
- The expenses do not exceed \$100 per day for one dependent and \$50 per day for each additional dependent.

Commissioners and advisory delegates can request reimbursement for dependent care expenses related to their participation in online assembly committee meetings and/or in-person plenary sessions in Salt Lake City. Acceptable reimbursable expenses may include “non-traditional” expenses such as travel for a family member to come to the commissioner or advisory delegates' home to provide care.

We hope that this will enable more ruling elders and teaching elders to consider serving as a commissioner to the assembly. Please share this full policy as you identify and recruit individuals for this important work.

## Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSADs)

To be eligible for a Theological Student Advisory Delegate position:

- A theological student who is under care of your presbytery must be nominated by their seminary and elected by the presbytery.

- Each eligible theological institution may nominate one alternate in addition to the principal(s). All nominated students **shall have at least one more year of study remaining in their degree program** following the assembly.
- The Office of the General Assembly will contact theological institutions in September 2023 to provide information about the process for nominating students as TSADs.
- The Office of the General Assembly will notify the presbytery stated clerk, most likely in the fall or winter, of the seminary's nomination of a student and will provide the stated clerk with a form to confirm the presbytery's election of the TSAD.

Your committee on preparation for ministry may wish to reach out to students under care who meet these requirements and alert them of this opportunity.

## Reporting Participant Information

Please make sure to **schedule the election** of the presbytery's commissioners and YAAD in a timely manner so that their names will be reported to the Stated Clerk **no later than Saturday, December 28, 2023**. Remember that we cannot receive names of YAADs reported after December 28, 2023.

As you move forward with the nomination and election process, please be sure that you collect **all of the required information** for each commissioner and YAAD:

- First and last name
- Correct email address (it is especially important that you verify this)
- Current mailing address
- Age (as of June 25, 2024)
- Gender
- Racial ethnic category

Starting in September 2023, the online system for reporting information about persons elected as commissioners and YAADs will be available through the Stated Clerks' portal. Stated clerks will receive additional instructions by that date. If your presbytery elects your commissioners/YAAD earlier, please do not report that information until the Stated Clerks' portal is available.

## Leadership Recommendations

In early March 2024 the Co-Moderators of the 225th General Assembly, Revs. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis, will appoint 26 commissioners to serve as assembly committee moderators and vice-moderators. Any commissioner interested in being considered for an assembly committee leadership position must complete and submit the online leadership application form available September 2023.

Please inform all commissioners that they have access to this process, as well as encouraging ruling elder and teaching elder commissioners whom you believe would serve well as assembly committee leaders to indicate their interest by submitting the leadership application form as soon as it is made available.

You are encouraged to give careful thought to which of the nominated ruling elders and teaching elders possess the necessary gifts, skills, and experience to serve as capable leaders, even before your presbytery's election takes place, and to submit your recommendations as soon as possible; because these recommendations are always held in strict confidence, they will not influence the election and can be withdrawn if the individual is not elected. More information and a recommendation form will be available in September 2023.

With any questions about this process, please contact [valerie izumi](#).

## What else to expect at this General Assembly

The Ballroom location in the Salt Palace Convention Center will provide a conducive atmosphere for the long assembly plenary meetings, but it will be smaller than the traditional large hall.

There will be seating in the plenary hall for corresponding members, presbytery executive staff persons, and synod and presbytery stated clerks who are present in Salt Lake City. **Advance registration is required to be assigned a seat in the plenary hall.** Additionally, those who register to attend in person will be able to reserve accommodations in one of the assembly hotels through the GA Meeting Service.

## Observers

The introduction of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly beautifully expresses the values present at and the core characteristics of the gathering that is the General Assembly. In the spirit of hospitality, we welcome observers.

Despite limited seating in the plenary hall, observers will still be able to gather in overflow spaces within the Salt Palace convention center. The spaces may have limited capacity but will allow for observers to gather together with other Presbyterians, view the 226<sup>th</sup> GA livestream, and experience God's presence as we engage "with one another in the ministry of the gathered church."

**Please note that observers will be responsible for making their own lodging arrangements in Salt Lake City.**

Access to livestreaming will be available for those who are not able or choose not to travel to Salt Lake City.

## Opportunities for Engagement

The in-person portion of the assembly includes four and a half very full days when commissioners and advisory delegates will have little free time. Hence, it is not feasible to sponsor the traditional GA Exhibit Hall. However, there will be other opportunities for engagement, including the Welcome Reception on Saturday evening, June 29, other sponsored breakfast and lunch gatherings (TBD), and a Welcome Room near the plenary hall with comfortable seating and refreshments in addition to Registration and the Information Center.

Rev. July 11, 2023



**Appendix** with Standing Rules on Commissioner, YAAD, and TSAD eligibility, representation, and nomination and election process.

## **GA Commissioners**

Standing Rule B.1:

- a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-3.0501. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in [Minutes of the General Assembly, Part II, Statistics](#) of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.
- b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.
- c. Teaching elders and ruling elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.

See 2022 membership figures and eligible commissioners for each presbytery can be found in this [chart](#).

## **Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs)**

Standing Rule B.2.d:

(1) Each presbytery may elect an active member of one of its congregations, or a participant of a New Worshipping Community or an immigrant fellowship which has a relationship with the presbytery, who shall be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

(2) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, and may also submit the name of an alternate. Any presbytery failing to meet the deadline is not eligible to send a young adult advisory delegate to that assembly.

## **Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSADs)**

Standing Rule B.2.e.

(1) The number of theological student advisory delegates, who must be in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, shall be no more than: two from each of the schools that are institutional members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Committee on Theological

Education; one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each school represented by an invited participant on the Committee on Theological Education; and one from an additional seminary identified by the Office of the General Assembly as having a high number of students who are PC(USA) inquirers/candidates as reported by the presbyteries.

(2) Each eligible theological institution may nominate one alternate in addition to the principal(s). All nominated students shall have at least one more year of study remaining in their degree program following the assembly.

(3) These nominations shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected. Any theological institution failing to meet the deadline shall not be entitled to a theological student advisory delegate to that assembly.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall forward the names of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election. When the election is completed, the presbytery shall certify that fact to the Stated Clerk.

### **Persons Living with a Disability**

#### Standing Rule D.1.b:

A commissioner [and young adult and theological student advisory delegates] certified by their presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by their presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.