

*After seasons of lament and hope, the theme of General Assembly 226 – **Live into Hope** – is a charge for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as we continue in a time of deep questions about the shape and future of Christ’s church. This summer’s GA, which will address some of those questions, will be held both online and in person in Salt Lake City, Utah.*



### ► **Virtual and In-Person**

Committee meetings, Tuesday, June 25 - Thursday, June 27, will be online, and while the committee structure has been set, post-pandemic GA continues to evolve. GA226 will mark the **absence of an exhibit hall**, which had served as a gathering place for conference attendees and a space for ministries to offer education on their areas. There will, however, be opportunities in Salt Lake City to meet denominational agencies.



Also different for the 226<sup>th</sup>: **The Hands and Feet Initiative**, which began as a (then unnamed) service project in 2016 by the National Hispanic/Latino-a Presbyterian Caucus at the 222<sup>nd</sup> GA and expanded during J. Herbert Nelson’s time as stated clerk, will not be an organized, denominational event. Instead, GA attendees are encouraged to worship on Sunday, June 30, with one of the PC(USA) churches in the Salt Lake City area, and the Presbytery of Utah has extended an invitation to all in attendance.

Plenary, in-person meetings begin on July 1.

### ► **Stated Clerk Nominee: The Rev. Jihyun Oh**

The General Assembly Nominating Committee has selected **Jihyun Oh** as its nominee for stated clerk. Oh, who was born

in South Korea and reared in Kansas, would be the first Korean American to serve in the denomination’s highest ecclesial office. Commissioners will vote on Oh’s nomination during the conference.

### ► **Co-moderators:**

Four are standing as GA co-moderator nominees. The **Rev. CeCe Armstrong** and **Rev. Tony Larson**, both of South Carolina, are standing together, and **Rev. Dr. Marian McClure Taylor** of Kentucky will stand with the **Rev. Danny Morales** of Florida. The election for co-moderators will be at 8 p.m. on Sunday, June 30, in Salt Lake City. It also can be viewed online.

### ► **Flexibility for small churches**

Several overtures could have a direct effect on the lives of small congregations. Curriculum development, the roles of commissioned pastors and alternative ways for worshiping communities to be formed, supervised and led will be considered.

### ► **Unification of OGA and PMA**

The Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency – which handle the ecclesiastical (OGA) and the mission (PMA), respectively –

are about to become one, with commissioners at GA approving one unified budget instead of two. The Unification Commission will make a report on progress to-date. The commission has already combined PMA's and OGA's communication offices.

### ► Sexual orientation, gender identity protections

GA will consider amending the *Book of Order* to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the categories against which the denomination does not discriminate. The so-called "Olympia overture," which originated from the Olympia (Washington) Presbytery, also makes reference to pastoral ordination and installation procedures that could determine a "candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation ..."

### ► Fossil fuels and climate justice

The Environmental and Climate Justice committee will consider an overture [ENV-02] that recommends adding any publicly traded companies "whose primary source of income is derived from the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels are to be placed on the General Assembly's list of prohibited securities" and urges the denomination and its members to seek investment in renewable energy enterprises. ENV-01 recommends adopting a "Sustainable Peace Pledge" with a focus on long-term

strategy to mitigate the effect of climate change, and ENV-03 encourages quick action on plastic pollution mitigation. GA will consider a study on the impact of lithium mining, with particular attention to activities on Indigenous lands.

### ► Israel/Palestine

OVT-33 asks the GA to direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to begin "focused engagement" with General Electric (GE) and another company involved in law enforcement contracts along the U.S.-Mexico border. Pittsburgh Presbytery points to GE's production of military aircraft engines that have been used by Israeli military to attack Gaza recently and as far back as 2008.

OVT-38 would expand a 2004 resolution confronting Christian Zionism. In a recommendation: GA will be asked to consider removing Hewlett-Packard, Inc., from the 2025 Divestment/Proscription list of MRTI.

### ► Prison Justice

The General Assembly has been asked to support removal of a loophole in the U.S. Constitution that permits slavery and involuntary servitude, saying the "Punishment Clause" and its values are contrary to the teachings of Scripture and contrary to the values and philosophies of liberty and human rights set forth in the tenets of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



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