MINUTES

Monthly Meeting
COMMITTEE ON THE
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
June 17, 2021
Video Conference

WELCOME AND PRAYER The Stated Meeting of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) convened via video conference at 12:00 p.m. by Moderator Stephanie Anthony. Sam Bonner opened the meeting with prayer.	**WELCOME AND PRAYER**
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN LAND Elona Street Stewart led the acknowledgement of the sacred ground of our indigenous ancestors.	**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN LAND**
APPROVE AGENDA By consensus the Committee approved the meeting agenda as amended.	**AGENDA APPROVAL**
ATTENDANCE The following persons were present for all or part of the meeting. **COGA Members:** Stephanie Anthony, Moderator Eliana Maxim, Vice-Moderator Sam Bonner Dave Davis Lynn Hargrove Wilson Kennedy Blythe Kieffer Leeanne Masters Robin Pugh Luis Ocasio Torres Sallie Watson J. Herbert Nelson II, Ex-officio Diane Moffett, Executive Director, PMAB Elona Street Stewart, Co-Moderator of the 224th GA (2020) **EXCUSED** Andy James Shannon Vance-Ocampo Luci Duckson-Bramble Leon Lovell Martin	**PARTICIPANTS**

<u>OGA Staff:</u> Kerry Rice Nancy Taylor Jihyun Oh Tricia Dykers-Koenig- Julia Henderson Rick Jones Laurie Griffith Dianna Wright Vicente Guna **<u>Other Guests:</u>** Kathy Lueckert, President, ASG Mike Kirk, General Council, ASG Ruth Gardiner, H.R., ASG Denise Hampton, Controller, ASG	
SHARING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING The Moderator invited those present to share joys and concerns.	**SHARING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING**
COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT **ETHICS POLICY EXCEPTION** Stephanie Anthony reported that the Coordinating Committee approved an exception to the Ethics Policy regarding COGA members applying for positions in OGA. Elona Street Stewart shared that her presbytery is developing a reparations program to which she and Greg Bentley will be trustees.	**COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT** **ETHICS POLICY EXCEPTION**
COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT **HYBRID COGA MEETING RECOMMENDATION** The coordinating Committee is requesting permission to hold a hybrid in-person meeting September 27 - 29, 2021. The Committee voted and approved the request to the Stated Clerk for permission to hold a hybrid meeting in September. Wilson Kennedy let the committee in prayer.	**COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT** **HYBRID COGA MEETING RECOMMENDATION**

COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT **JULY 15, 2021, VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING CANCELLATION** By consensus, the Committee agreed to cancel the July 15 video meeting.	**COORDINATING COMMITTEE REPORT** **JULY 15, 2021, VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING CANCELLATION**
PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD NOMINATION APPROVAL **MOTION MADE, SECOND, AND APPROVED** COGA accept the nominee (attached) approved by the PHS Board.	**PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD NOMINATION APPROVAL**
WORKGROUP REPORT – DESIGN TEAM The Design team report (attached) was given by moderator Stephanie Anthony. By consensus, the Committee gave the Design Team permission to reach out to other agencies regarding advisory delegate program, evaluate its effectiveness, and potentially make recommendations to GA 225 about changes to align it with the priorities of the church in the 21st century.	**WORKGROUP REPORT – DESIGN TEAM**
WORKGROUP REPORT – EVENTS Dave Davis provided an update (attached) of the events workgroup.	**WORKGROUP REPORT - EVENTS**
WORKGROUP REPORT – PROCESS AND INNOVATIVE DISCERNMENT TEAM Leeanne Masters reported for the Process and Innovative Discernment Team	**WORKGROUP REPORT – PROCESS AND INNOVATIVE DISCERNMENT TEAM**
WORKGROUP REPORT - COMMUNICATIONS Wilson Kennedy updated COGA on the work of the Communications Workgroup.	**WORKGROUP REPORT - COMMUNICATIONS**
BIG TENT UPDATE Eliana Maxim reported on the discussions regarding Big Tent.	**BIG TENT UPDATE**

ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER	ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business the meeting adjourned 1:35 pm with prayer at offered by the Stated Clerk.	

Respectfully Submitted:

Diane Minter

Nominee for the Board of the Presbyterian Historical Society
Class of 2025

In April 2021, COGA approved four nominees for the Class of 2025: Anita Coleman and Robert Galloway for a first term; and Joanna Kim and Michael Livingston for second terms. At the time, current Board member Deborah Block was unsure if she could serve a second term, but she has now affirmed her desire to do so. At its meeting on June 3, 2021, the Presbyterian Historical Society Board approved Deborah Block's nomination to a second term in the Class of 2025, and the Board now sends that nomination to COGA for its approval. Deborah's brief bio is below.

Rev. Dr. Deborah A. Block is pastor and head of staff at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she began her ordained ministry in 1978. Deborah served on the committee that launched fundraising for the Pam Byers Memorial Fund collecting initiative at PHS, and she has visited PHS as a researcher, most recently in conjunction with her work on Margaret Towner, the first woman ordained as a minister of word and sacrament in the PCUSA.

Deborah serves on the Board of Trustees of Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin. She is a recent past chair of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Board and served as co-moderator of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians.

She received her Master of Divinity degree from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1977 and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary, where she taught as Mohr Professor of Ministry in 1992 and 1993. She has also served as a member of McCormick's Board of Trustees, and in 2005, received McCormick's Distinguished Ministry Award.

In 2006, Deborah stood as a candidate for moderator of the PC(USA) General Assembly. She has contributed to several books, including *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary; Celebrating Our Call: Ordination Stories of Presbyterian Women; Proclaiming the Great Ends of the Church: Mission and Ministry for Presbyterians*; and *A Spiritual Life: Perspectives from Poets, Prophets, and Preachers*.

Design Team Report to COGA

COGA Meeting June 17, 2021

Current work

- Now that the docket is set and the major areas of our work have been identified and introduced, the Design Team has changed its schedule from weekly meetings to monthly meetings.
- Language Hospitality: We have had two conversations with Jason Raff, Global Language Resources manager in ASG, about the digital and human resources available for translation and interpretation, as well as some ballpark financial implication figures. The Design Team would like to see all materials that are provided to commissioners and advisory delegates about business, as well as training and orientation materials, provided in any language needed. Previous practice only translated items of business automatically, not including rationale or advice & counsel notes unless specifically requested or deemed important to have in a specific language. We are not ready to make a formal request to COGA about this until there is a more accurate estimate of the costs. That will make the motion and decision cleaner and more precise. COGA can expect a request for action early in the fall.
- YAAD participation and representation: We recently met with several YAAD advisors and Anna Kendig Flores of GACOR and reviewed the debrief from the advisors of the 224th General Assembly. We anticipated our conversation centering around participation rates, from election to adjournment, as well as diversity among the YAAD themselves. The conversation certainly started there but expanded to include questions about the nature and purpose of our advisory delegate system. Does it serve to enhance the participation of young adults (missionaries, ecumenical partners, theological students) in discernment, or does it compartmentalize them? Do we support the advisory delegates in a way that allows them to think and act as a community? Are there ways to incentivize the election of young adults as commissioners? Related to that, what values might we have to reprioritize to make that happen? The Design Team recognized that there might be some long-term work to do around this topic that wouldn't impact GA 225, but could be a discussion at GA 225. We want to also bring some concrete recommendations to COGA that would impact the experience for the YAADs at the up-coming assembly as well. We'll spend more time with this at our July meeting.
- Cultural Humility & Implicit Bias Awareness: In conversation with the Process & Discernment Team and the Rev. Denise Anderson, Acting Director at Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries of PMA, we have been talking about how to provide several different tiers of training about cultural humility and implicit bias awareness for GA participants. We see a need for different kinds of training for committee leadership, assembly staff (paid and volunteer, such as Zoom monitors and committee assistants), and commissioners and advisory delegates. We hope to be able to use some video resources that are already in production and partner with mid-council leaders or other

regional groupings for video conference discussions of materials that participants might view on their own. COGA members and other church leaders might be asked to help facilitate some of these conversations of mid-council or regional leaders don't feel equipped to do so.

- BIPOC gatherings: A small group is drafting a recommendation to bring to COGA in August about providing designated gathering space (physical and virtual) that includes both process and spiritual support by and for BIPOC assembly participants.
- Assembly chaplains: A small group is drafting a recommendation to bring to COGA in August about providing chaplains for all commissioners and advisory delegates during both in-person and on-line portions of GA 225.
- A second consultation with mid-council leaders is still up-coming, not yet scheduled. It is important that the next consultation include the Stated Clerk to assist with communication and questions about the format and vision of GA 225, as well as implications for future assemblies. Questions as we work to get these scheduled centers around what to include in the time together to make it helpful to both MCLs and Design Team/COGA, whether or not to keep it at the identified group invited to the first consultation on recommendation from synod leader, and what size/format will allow for the best engagement. On the last question – We may need to more COGA members to help host these conversations and/or breakout rooms in order to keep discussion groups small enough to allow for full participation.

COGA discussion items

- Mid Council Leader conversations – What are you hearing that it will be helpful to include in these conversations and how do you think we can best organize these?

COGA actions

- A recommendation from the Coordinating Committee after discussion about the Design Team conversations is that the COGA moderator and vice-moderator consult with the PMAB chair and vice-chair to see if we can establish a joint team of relevant staff and elected members/volunteers to look at the purpose and history of the advisory delegate program, evaluate its effectiveness, and potentially make recommendations to GA 225 about changes to align it with the priorities of the church in the 21st century.

COGA Events Team

June 2021

The Events team has continued to meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Decisions related to non-business events, agency access to commissioners as committees meet, and the level of support offered through the General Assembly Guidebook to agency and outside group events remain pending and await more input regarding Center renovation and IT development.

Our conversations have shifted to developing job descriptions for volunteer assembly hosts with Mid-Kentucky presbytery. The current vision includes host teams split into a few different categories: airport welcome and information, hotel lobby welcome and information, and support at the Center during meetings. Team leaders will be recruited, and hosts will be asked to make shorter, reasonable time commitments during the weeks commissioners are coming to Louisville.

We have also met with the Co-moderators to receive an update on General Assembly worship planning and how/if the Events team can be of assistance to the Co-moderators in worship, the stated clerk with "Hands and Feet", and those involved in planning Juneteenth worship and activities

COGA DISCUSSION ITEMS:

The Events team looks forward to discussion in the fall of what COGA members role might be at the 225th Assembly

COGA ACTION ITEMS:

None

COGA COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

June 2021

Since our last gathering, the Comms team has worked together to create a timeline of communications, features, and opportunities for engagement as we prepare for and communicate GA225. Please let us know how we can assist you in communicating and interpreting your work! There are over 700 regular reads of the “On the Road to GA” newsletter and the click-rate is extremely high. The church is interested in our planning, so please keep us up to date on your work!