Issue 4 | October 2025

On the Road

to the 227th General Assembly

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Dates to Know

December 24, 2025
Commissioner and Advisory Delegate names submitted

Spring 2026
Business deadlines
Available here

June 22-24, 2026
GA Committees meet online

June 27, 2026
Community Day - service and education opportunities, ministry fair, and community gatherings

June 28, 2026
Worship in local congregations and convening of plenary

June 29-July 2, 2026
GA Plenary

Bringing a Global Voice to General Assembly

The upcoming General Assembly will be the first guided by a newly approved set of Standing Rules. These new rules confirmed the existing advisory roles of Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs) and Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSADs) while creating a new role: Partner Advisory Delegates (PADs). Partner Advisory Delegates reflect the importance of voices from across the globe to the discernment of the General Assembly. PADs will represent people whose lived experiences may be unique from those of commissioners and other advisory delegates. Many will be international partners who will represent ecumenical churches and interfaith communities. Others may represent mission partners of the PC(USA) — including those who come from communities served by these partnerships. As PADs, these delegates will be empowered with voice and vote in committee, as well as voice and advisory vote in plenary. Their insights will help the church to bring in the voices of those living out their faith and ministries in contexts that otherwise may not be embodied at the Assembly. This is essential for the deepening of global partnerships, the broadening of understanding God's wholeness throughout the world, and the strengthening of effective discernment as a PC(USA) who does not embrace mission or ministry in isolation.

Kate Trigger Duffert,
Associate Stated Clerk and Director of General Assembly Planning.

Photo by: Rich Copley

2016 GA Commissioner reflects on experience 10 years later

The Rev. Dr. Libby Shannon served as a commissioner to the 222nd General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, in 2016. She shares how popular descriptions of GA waffle between a reunion of friends and a look at "how the sausage gets made" both fail to fully capture the experience. Instead, she says, participating in the work of the church through General Assembly is like tending to a garden. It can be fun and meaningful and is also hard and often messy work. It can take time to see the impact of that labor. But spring after spring, the bulbs come, the flowers bloom, and the beauty of God working through the church becomes apparent again.

UC Member José Rosa-Rivera talks about sharing the Commission's work in Puerto Rico

Unification Commission Co-Moderator and Ruling Elder Cristi Scott Ligon says the commission's focus is on Christ's will even during hard and painful decisions. Commission member and Ruling Elder José Rosa-Rivera reflects on talking with Presbyterians in Puerto Rico about the unification process, confronting doubts that this process would be anything new. He says his goal is to make certain that Presbyterian churches across Puerto Rico remain informed about the work of the Unification Commission and its impacts on them and the larger denomination.

Special committee works on drafting new confession for consideration by GA227

In 2022, the 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved an overture from the Presbytery of Arkansas calling for the formation of "a special committee to write a new confession for the PC(USA) to be considered for inclusion in the Book of Confessions" (TWE-08). Committee members have been quietly and steadfastly pursuing the mandate they were given for the last year and a half and recently convened for several days in Louisville to move forward in producing a draft confession to be considered by the 227th General Assembly next year.

When the full committee gathered together at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville last month, the subcommittees brought their work to be considered by everyone, and the committee worked to compile the various components into one cohesive document. Together, the group identified that, historically, the confessions taken up by the church have each sought to address — in their own contexts — where the truth of the Gospel was at risk. Following in this tradition, the committee prayerfully considered the central threat to the Gospel at this moment and came up with a clear answer.

"It is the heretical worship of power and money, and its concentration among the few, and idolatry that equates money and power with the divine and the will of God. Maintaining this concentration of power and money requires the domination of others. Systems of oppression are upheld by lies, by othering, and through persecution and violence aimed at producing fear and disempowerment."

Read more from the Presbyterian News Service by visiting https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/9/29/special-committee-works-drafting-new-confession

Office of Public Witness hosts two webinars on proper gun storage as part of 'Decade to End Gun Violence'

In September, the Office of Public Witness within the Interim Unified Agency of the PC(USA) hosted its second webinar this year on proper gun storage. The first webinar took place in May in partnership with the Be SMART campaign, which was launched a decade ago to promote responsible gun ownership and reduce child gun deaths.

According to the Presbyterian News Service, the 225th General Assembly (2022) approved a 10-year campaign called "The Decade to End Gun Violence" to reaffirm their commitment to end gun violence. The campaign called for action and education toward ending gun violence to take place at all levels of the church. In 2024, the 226th General Assembly approved an overture that offered seven concrete action steps for congregations to prevent gun violence, which included education on proper gun storage. The 2024 overture also called for the Office of Public Witness to "include secure gun storage and the other safety measures listed here in their ongoing gun violence prevention actions, advocacy and resources."

Read more from the Presbyterian News Service by visiting https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/5/16/secure-gun-storage-part-pcusas-decade-end-gun-violence

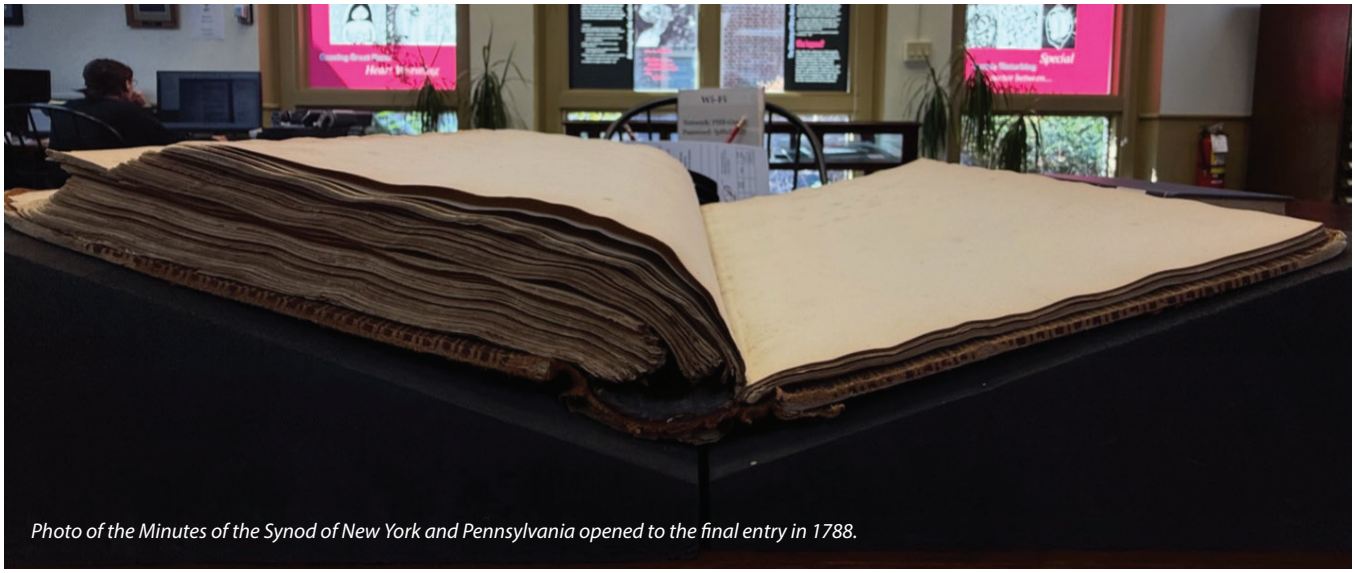


Photo of the Minutes of the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania opened to the final entry in 1788.

Director of General Assembly Planning looks to the future through the lens of history

by Kate Trigger Duffert,
Associate Stated Clerk and Director of General Assembly Planning.

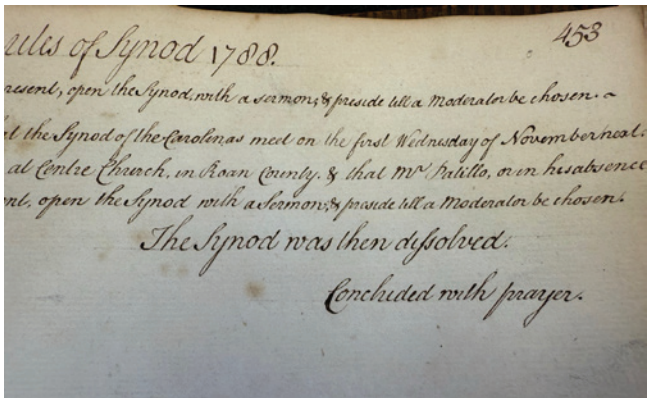
This September, I had the opportunity to take some time away from a work meeting in Philadelphia to visit the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS). I had never had the chance to visit in person and was eager to see original documents from the earliest days of the General Assembly. The outstanding staff were gracious enough to pull several documents for me to peruse. One of the documents was a handwritten journal of the minutes from the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania in the 1700s. The pages included both the tedium of membership numbers and the unique documentation of how the body approached the American Revolution. While there was much recorded, the book had many blank pages at the end. Upon reading the final page of text, I paused to take a moment and then capture a photo.

The final pages of written text in these minutes document the 1788 decision of the synod to establish a General Assembly. Their work outlined their discernment of the need for an Assembly, of the texts that should form the foundation and constitution of such a body, and of how to begin preparing for such an Assembly to begin. After establishing the necessary pieces, the minutes ended with, "The synod was then dissolved. Concluded with prayer."

I was struck immediately by the significance of this recorded action. The following year, 1789, would be the first General Assembly of a presbyterian denomination in the United States. It is the first to the upcoming 227th, which will occur in Milwaukee in 2026. It's hard to imagine that those who voted to create the Assembly could have predicted meeting over Zoom, voting through MyGA, or the global impact of Assembly decisions. On a personal note, I can't imagine they would have expected the person coordinating the planning of an Assembly in 2026 to be a woman and a ruling elder.

Whatever it was they thought the Assembly might become, the gathering of the synod made

a remarkably courageous choice. They took an action to dissolve themselves and their current established norms. They left pages blank, not knowing how their hope for a new manifestation of God's church might take shape in the coming years. They bravely let go and set the groundwork for each Assembly to follow. Every participant in a General Assembly since has become a co-creator in the ongoing reformation of the church through the Assembly. Every moment of Assembly discernment has built on the inheritance created in that one page of minutes — leading us to both repent for and celebrate that which they have handed down.



ules of Synod 1788. 453

ausent, open the Synod with a sermon & preside till a Moderator be chosen.

d the Synod of the Carolinas meet on the first Wednesday of November next.

al Centre Church, in Roan County, & that Mr Pahillo, or in his absence

nt, open the Synod with a sermon & preside till a Moderator be chosen.

The Synod was then dissolved.

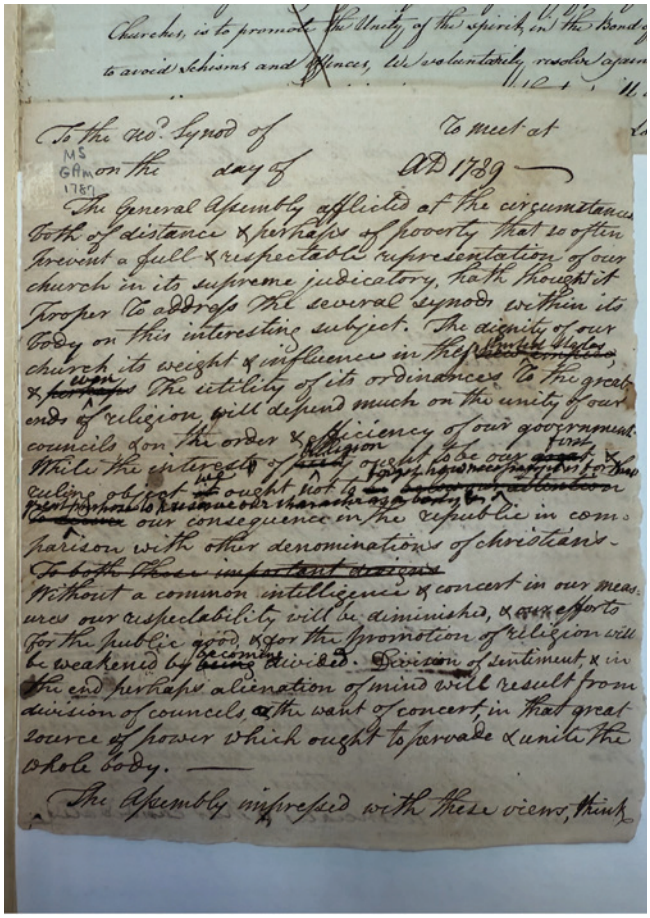
Concluded with prayer.

Photo of the final entry in 1788 from the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania, paving the way for the establishment of the first General Assembly (1789).

For those with discerning eyes, you may see that the exhibition in the windows behind my photo of the minutes centers on the Reimagining Conference. Since 1788, these blank pages have been metaphorically filled with the addition of the voices of women, people of color, LGBTQIA+ people and many others who would never have been allowed into the Assembly in 1789. In a beautiful way, it is a reminder that God is leading the church toward a more complete understanding of who we are called to be if only we will let go of what is no longer useful and instead open up our blank pages to be filled by the ongoing work of the Spirit.

As we approach the 227th General Assembly, I invite you to embrace this time of reflection.

How is God encouraging us to persevere toward wholeness? In what ways does persevering mean letting go? In what ways does wholeness call us into the unknown? How might God be speaking to an Assembly that could have never been imagined by those before but that we know to be true? How might you be called into joining in the long line of discernment for this 227th Assembly?



Churches, is to promote the Unity of this spirit, on the Bond of
to avoid Schisms and Offences, We voluntarily resolve & agree

To the Rev. Synod of To meet at

MS GA Mon the day of AD 1789

The General Assembly afflicted at the circumstances
both of distance & perhaps of poverty that so often
prevent a full & respectable representation of our
church in its supreme judicatory, hath thought it
proper to address the several synods within its
body on this interesting subject. The dignity of our
church its weight & influence in the United States
& perhaps even The utility of its ordinances to the great
ends of religion will depend much on the unity of our
councils & on the order & efficiency of our government.
While the interests of religion ought to be our first
& chief object we ought not to
our consequence in the republic in com-
parison with other denominations of christians.
Without a common intelligence & concert in our meas-
ures our respectability will be diminished, & our efforts
for the public good, & for the promotion of religion will
be weakened by becoming divided. Division of sentiment, & in
the end perhaps alienation of mind will result from
division of councils, & the want of concert, in that great
source of power which ought to pervade & unite the
whole body.

The Assembly impressed with these views, think

Photo of a draft letter sent from the Moderator of the first General Assembly to all member synods outlining the need for shared funding to promote diversity of representation in its members. This is the origin of the current per capita structure.

"The General Assembly, afflicted at the circumstances, both of distance, and perhaps of poverty, that so often prevent a full and respectable representation of our church in its supreme judicatory, hath thought it proper to address the several synods within this body on this interesting subject. The dignity of our church, its weight and influence in the United States, and even the utility of its ordinances to the great ends of religion, will depend much on the unity of our councils, and on the order and efficiency of our government. …"