

THE PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Stated Meeting
March 14, 2026 at 10:00 AM
Location: Scipioville Presbyterian Church, Scipio Center, NY
Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is on file in the Stated Clerk's files and available upon request.

CALL TO ORDER

The Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by the Moderator, who confirmed that a quorum was present. The Moderator opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed commissioners and guests, reviewing meeting procedures.

Commissioners were invited to share good news and joys from around the presbytery. Among the good news shared was a report on the Westminster-Good Futures Accelerator Program.

WORSHIP

Worship was led by Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, Stated Clerk and pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Scipioville, the host congregation.

Music and prayer followed, and prayers of the people were offered.

WORK OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The voting procedures were reviewed and a quorum was confirmed in attendance. The Moderator reviewed the docket and invited any changes or additions. The Moderator asked if there was any objection to approving the docket; hearing none, the docket was approved.

The minutes of the January 21, 2026 Stated Meeting were presented. The Moderator asked if there was any objection to approving the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

Report of the Lead Presbyter for Transformation

Lead Presbyter Rev. Dr. Greg Garis offered a written report covering activities from January 8 through March 4, 2026. The report was provided to commissioners in advance and is on file with the Stated Clerk.

Rev. Garis reported on extensive engagement with congregations, pastoral nominating committees, and presbytery committees across both Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley during the period. He noted visits to several congregations for worship and preaching, including Northminster Presbyterian Church in Endwell, NY, First Presbyterian Church in Liverpool, NY, Sennett-Federated Church in Auburn, NY, and First United Church of East Syracuse, along with participation in a wide range of meetings with presbytery committees, commissions, and staff of both presbyteries.

Rev. Garis highlighted ongoing collaboration between committees of the two presbyteries as merger discernment continues, including joint work by the Committee on Ministry, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the Commission on Christian Leadership and Formation, the Social Justice and Justice in Mission committees, and the Human Resources and Personnel committees.

He drew attention to the Focus and Coordination Team's continuing work and announced that a gathering for members of both presbyteries has been scheduled for May 16 at First Presbyterian Church in Cazenovia, beginning at 10:30 a.m. with a formal start at 11:00 a.m. The gathering will feature a presentation by Rev. Bill Carter on the experience of the Lehigh/Lackawanna Presbytery merger, along with conversation on future mission engagement. Lunch will be provided, with a donation requested from participants.

Rev. Garis also shared continuing education content from a four-week course titled "The Rise of the Nones," presented by Dr. Ryan Burge and Dr. Tony Jones through Homebrewed Christianity. The course presented the first major quantitative research on religiously unaffiliated Americans, identifying four distinct groups: Nones in Name Only (NiNOs), Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNRs), Disengaged, and Zealous Secularists. Researchers estimate that approximately 28–30% of people in the United States now identify as religiously unaffiliated. Slides from the presentation were shared with the body.

The written report was received.

Report of the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk, Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, offered a brief update.

The Stated Clerk presented proposed language for a Standing Rules revision concerning the election process for Moderator and Vice-Moderator, brought back for a second reading and action following first presentation at the January 2026 meeting. The proposed language establishes election procedures for presbytery officers, including nomination processes, voting requirements, assumption of office, procedures for failure to elect, and vacancy provisions.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse adopt the proposed Standing Rule language on Election Procedures for Presbytery Officers (SR X) as presented.

Following discussion, the motion was approved.

Report from the Administrative Commission for Hannibal Church

A report was presented on behalf of the Administrative Commission for Hannibal Church.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse reaffirm the Administrative Commission for Hannibal Church with Rev. Garrett Anderson, Roger Dilmore, and Victor Jenkins as members. The commission has been granted Original Jurisdiction, which includes the ability to transfer the property and dissolve the congregation.

Following discussion, the motion was approved.

Report of the Human Resources Committee

Rev. Garrett Anderson, chairperson, presented the written report of the Human Resources Committee on behalf of the committee, which also includes Rev. Lorrie Cooney, Elder Liz DaBoll, and Elder Mark Kasdorf. The written report is on file with the Stated Clerk.

The committee reported two actions taken on behalf of the presbytery since the last stated meeting: the contract renewal for Kristin Schierer as bookkeeper on the same terms as 2025, and the contract renewal for Sarah Buckshot as communications coordinator on the same terms as 2025.

The committee also noted ongoing discussion regarding the possible expansion of Sarah Buckshot's role to serve both presbyteries with an increase in hours. Rev. Garrett Anderson

reported that he has agreed to recuse himself from all discussions and decisions involving the Assistant to the Lead Presbyter, Rev. Mary Anderson, to avoid any conflict of interest.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse suspend Standing Rule 12 and that members of the Human Resources Committee work jointly with the Personnel Committee of the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley to review and assess staffing needs and make recommendations to the presbyteries, provide for supervision, update policies, and conduct annual performance reviews for the Presbyteries of Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley.

Following discussion, the motion was approved.

Report of the Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice Committee presented materials and facilitated consideration of three overtures.

Overture: Staff Attorney for Immigration (Synod of the Northeast, #13g)

An overture from the Synod of the Northeast was presented, asking the 227th General Assembly (2026) to direct the Unified Agency to reinstate the position of Staff Attorney for Immigration as a full-time role held by a licensed immigration attorney, with full budget, programmatic funds, and guaranteed continuity of the position regardless of future reorganizations. The rationale cited disruption in access to coordinated immigration legal support for employment-based matters across mid-councils, increasing risk to immigrant pastors and candidates for ministry, and the complexity of federal immigration law as reasons requiring a centralized denominational response.

Following discussion, the presbytery voted to concur with the overture.

Overture: Peace and Justice through Just and Peaceful Means — Overture on Embargoing Israel

An overture was presented asking the 227th General Assembly (2026) to direct the PC(USA) Stated Clerk and Office of Public Witness to demand that Congress and the President enact a full trade embargo on Israel until the United Nations determines that specified conditions are met, including the end of the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, abolition of apartheid policies, demolition of the separation barrier, and recognition of the Palestinian right of return. The overture also asked the General Assembly to encourage presbyteries, congregations, clergy, and laity to call upon their representatives to the same end. The rationale cited prior GA policy statements, UN findings on the illegality of the occupation and related practices, and the deaths of over 67,000 Palestinians including more than 20,000 children in the Israeli military response to the October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks. The overture framed a full trade embargo as a nonviolent means of pressure consistent with the denomination's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution.

Following discussion, the presbytery voted to concur with the overture.

Overture: Paper Dolls to Free Families

The Social Justice Committee presented the "Paper Dolls to Free Families" campaign, an Amnesty International initiative calling on congregations and individuals to respond to the federal government's policy of detaining immigrant families, including children, in ICE detention facilities. The campaign highlighted the reopening of the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, TX, where families are being held in conditions that include

inadequate access to clean water, medical care, and educational opportunities for children. Studies cited in the campaign materials document the lasting psychological harm caused by detaining children under any conditions. The campaign invites participants to make paper dolls as a visible advocacy tool, deliver them to members of Congress, and contact their representatives to demand an end to family detention. The committee commended the campaign to congregations as an avenue for faithful public witness.

Report of Focus and Coordination

A report from the Focus and Coordination Team was presented. The team continued to report on the discernment process between the Presbyteries of Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley regarding possible merger. The upcoming joint gathering scheduled for May 16 at First Presbyterian Church in Cazenovia was highlighted, and the presbytery was invited to plan to attend.

The report was received.

Motion from the Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea (PPNK)

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse approve the webinar “Introduction to April 3 Massacre and its Memorials,” presented by Professor Merosé Hwang on August 31, 2025, as a resource to be submitted to General Assembly (PC-Biz) in support of the presbytery’s overture “On the Jeju 4.3 Tragedy in South Korea.” The webinar was presented to the Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea (PPNK) in conjunction with the Korea Peace Journey held in October 2025 and is available on the home page of www.PPNK.net.

Following discussion, the motion was approved.

Committee on Representation Report

A written informational report from the Committee on Representation was included in the meeting packet. The committee, chaired by Rev. Dr. Shavonn Lynch, reported that the committees on representation from Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley met jointly on February 11, 2026. The committee is developing an educational presentation on the parable of the Good Samaritan and its relevance for the current context, as well as a statement of inclusivity, both to be presented at a future meeting.

The report was received for information.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the presbytery, at 1:00 p.m. the presbytery voted to adjourn with prayer from the Moderator.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, Stated Clerk