

THE PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Annual Meeting

June 13, 2026 at 10:00 AM

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Auburn, Auburn, NY and online via Zoom

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

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

CALL TO ORDER

The Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse was convened by the Vice-Moderator, Rev. Dr. Shavonn Lynch, who confirmed that a quorum was present. Rev. Michael Hill was not present because the funeral of Elder David Graham took place at the same time as the meeting. The Vice-Moderator constituted the meeting with prayer and welcomed commissioners and guests. First-time minister members and ruling elder commissioners were recognized, corresponding members and guests were seated, and commissioners were invited to share joys from around the presbytery.

WORK OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Voting procedures for those participating in person and by Zoom were reviewed. The docket was moved and seconded. Following opportunity for discussion, the docket was approved.

The minutes of the January 21, 2026 Stated Meeting were presented. A correction was raised concerning the recording of the presbytery's overture advocate for the overture on the Jeju 4.3 Tragedy. The correction was accepted, and the minutes were approved as amended.

Board of Pensions Report

Rev. Luke Choi presented an update from the Board of Pensions. The report included information concerning 2027 medical coverage options and dependent coverage, continuation of Transitional Pastors Participation through 2029, changes affecting retiree medical coverage, and the Child Care Support benefit. The report was received.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Elder Lynn Jacques presented the report of the Nominating Committee. Corrections were made to the written slate: on the Commission on Ministry, Rev. Stuart Hayes had completed a second term, Elder Nancy Wind was continuing a second term through 2028, and the vacancies were identified as Classes of 2027 and 2029; on Finance and Property, Elder Frank McDowell was added as a first-term member through 2027; and on the Committee on Representation, Elder Barb Adams was identified as continuing for a second term through 2029.

The slate presented for election included the following names:

Commission on Ministry: Rev. Michael Hill, second term through 2029; Rev. Brian Copeland, second term through 2029. Continuing members noted in the report included Elder Bill Newell, Elder Sam Dance, Rev. Ken Wonderland, and Elder Nancy Wind. Vacancies remained in the Classes of 2027 and 2029.

Human Resources Committee (joint with Susquehanna Valley): Rev. Garrett Anderson, second term through 2029; Elder Mark Kasdorf, continuing through 2027.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (joint with Susquehanna Valley): Elder Courtney Steininger and Elder Eric Adamcik, continuing through 2027.

Finance and Property Committee: Bob Davenport; Vic Jenkins; Elder Frank McDowell, first term through 2027; and Ann Wiley, Treasurer, ex officio.

Committee on Representation (joint with Susquehanna Valley): Elder Barb Adams, second term through 2029.

Social Justice Committee (joint with Susquehanna Valley): Rev. Monica Styron, second term through 2029; Rev. Eric Adamcik and Rev. Dr. Barb Blom, pastor of the United Ministry in Aurora, continuing through 2027; Elder Sharye Skinner, continuing through 2027; Elder Mary Heather Mitchell, Peter Owen, and Elder Leann Herd, continuing through 2028.

Permanent Judicial Commission: Rev. Brian Copeland, first term through 2029; Rev. Karen Chamis, first term through 2029; Elder Neil Rotach, second term through 2029.

Nominating Committee: Elder Lynn Jacques, second term through 2029; Elder Sharye Skinner, continuing through 2027.

The Focus and Coordination Team, established by the Lead Presbyter, was reported as including Rev. Dr. Greg Garis and Rev. Mary Anderson, ex officio, together with Rev. Steve Plank, Rev. Lorrie Cooney, Elder Steve Eidt, Rev. David Johnson, Elder Jeff Smith, and Elder Robbie Jean Rice.

Nominations were closed. The Presbytery voted to accept the slate as amended. It was clarified that committee terms begin at the Annual Meeting and are three years in length.

WORSHIP AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The Presbytery entered into worship with call to worship, hymn, confession, passing of the peace, Scripture, proclamation, prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

During worship, Rev. Dr. Shavonn Lynch was installed as Moderator of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse and Rev. Courtney Steininger was installed as Vice-Moderator. The constitutional questions were asked of the officers and the Presbytery, prayer was offered, and the officers were declared installed.

Scripture included Romans 5 and Matthew 9:35-10:8. The meditation reflected on the compassion of Christ, justice and kindness, and the church's witness in the present social and political context.

Report of the Lead Presbyter for Transformation

Rev. Dr. Greg Garis presented his report, highlighting his work with congregations and committees of both Cayuga-Syracuse and Susquehanna Valley Presbyteries and the continuing development of collaboration between the two presbyteries. He reported on the May 16 Joint Presbytery Gathering in Cazenovia, attended by more than 90 people, and the ongoing work of the Focus and Coordination Team. He also reported increasing collaboration among committees of the two presbyteries and plans for continued joint gatherings and merger discernment. The written report was received.

Report of the Social Justice Committee / Finance and Property Committee

A proposal was presented concerning the use of Vanderkamp proceeds to address food insecurity resulting from reductions in SNAP benefits.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse use \$20,000 of the Vanderkamp proceeds during 2026 to provide grants to congregations whose food programs offset losses in SNAP benefits; that an application be jointly developed by the Finance and Property Committee and Social Justice Committee; that the Social Justice Committee manage applications and awards in consultation with the Treasurer and Finance Chair; and that funds be distributed through the Presbytery's bill-payment process.

The motion as originally presented referred to grants to "organizations." A friendly amendment changed "organizations" to "congregations." Following discussion, the motion as amended was approved.

Jeju 4.3 Overture / Korea Peacemaking Update

Elder Linda Russell provided an update on the Presbytery's overture concerning the Jeju 4.3 Tragedy in South Korea. She reported that the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley had also acted on the overture and that PC-Biz was listing Susquehanna Valley as the overture presenter and Cayuga-Syracuse as a concurring presbytery. She noted that Rev. Earl Arnold was serving as Susquehanna Valley's overture advocate and that the intended designation of Elder Linda Russell as Cayuga-Syracuse's overture advocate was not yet reflected in PC-Biz. The Stated Clerk indicated that the matter would be corrected. Work was also continuing to make the previously approved webinar resource available to the General Assembly committee.

Report of the Human Resources Committee

Rev. Garrett Anderson presented the report of the Human Resources Committee.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse approve the re-election of Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye as Stated Clerk and approve the contract for the Stated Clerk.

As a committee motion, no second was required. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

Synod of the Northeast Report

Elder Linda Russell presented an update from the Synod of the Northeast, including information about grants, emerging gospel communities, and continuing restructuring within the Synod. She reported the need for Cayuga-Syracuse to identify a teaching elder commissioner, a ruling elder commissioner, a young adult delegate, and alternates for the next Synod term, with names needed by August. The report was received.

Annual Report of the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk, Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, presented the Annual Report of the Stated Clerk for 2025. He reported that eight congregations had not submitted annual statistical reports. Officially reported statistics showed 2,093 active members, average weekly worship attendance of 1,024, and 446 persons reported as Friends of the Congregation.

The Stated Clerk also presented an internal estimate intended to illustrate the likely effect of the missing reports. Based on approximately 280 estimated unreported members, the Presbytery's actual active membership was estimated at approximately 2,373, with average weekly worship attendance of approximately 1,161 and approximately 506 Friends of the Congregation. The Stated Clerk emphasized that these estimates were for internal planning and were not submitted to the Office of the General Assembly as official statistics.

The report noted that the missing statistical reports represented approximately twelve percent of estimated Presbytery membership and identified complete reporting as an important governance concern, particularly as merger discernment with Susquehanna Valley continues. The Stated Clerk also reported on General Assembly preparation, development of digital Church Information Forms, the need to complete congregational records reviews during the summer or early fall, and the continuing need for members to serve on administrative commissions, investigating committees, and the Permanent Commission on Sexual Misconduct. The written report was received.

Ruling Elder Commissioner Parity Report

The Stated Clerk presented the proposed Ruling Elder Commissioner Parity Report pursuant to G-3.0301. The formula was based on 36 eligible voting teaching elders and 33 active congregations, providing every congregation at least one ruling elder commissioner and additional representation for the three largest congregations. The resulting allocation provides 39 ruling elder commissioner positions to 36 eligible teaching elders.

MOTION: That the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse adopt the proposed Ruling Elder Commissioner Parity Report and allocation formula as presented.

Following discussion, the motion was approved. The new parity formula took effect immediately and superseded the previous formula.

Church Transitions and Discernment

MOTION: That the Presbytery direct the Stated Clerk, in cooperation with Finance and Property, to craft a proposal for a Standing Committee on Church Transitions and Discernment to handle all financial and property matters related to church closings, property repurposing, use of church properties overall, and disputes and investigations related to financial matters and property matters that do not fall under Book of Order disciplinary procedures. Further, at the request of a sufficient number of elder and minister members, direct the Moderator to schedule an online Special Meeting for the presentation and consideration of the new committee.

The available record, including subsequent action of the Presbytery, establishes that the Stated Clerk was directed to develop the proposed structure for consideration at a Special Meeting.

Treasurer's Reports

The Treasurer's Reports were received for information and are on file with the Stated Clerk.

Report of the Commission on Ministry

The written report of the Commission on Ministry, submitted by Shawn Reyburn, was received for information. The committee reported on its liaison relationships with congregations, oversight of terms of call and congregations in transition, and exploration of alternative pastoral leadership arrangements for rural congregations.

The committee reported that it had approved CLP George Reed to be commissioned to the congregation in Mexico. It also reported continuing work concerning Morrisville Church and conversations with Auburn First and Rev. Dr. Shavonn Lynch concerning a temporary pastoral relationship.

Finance and Property Committee Annual Report

The written annual report of the Finance and Property Committee was received for information. The committee reported improvements and automation in Presbytery accounting and payment processes, an eight percent annualized return on investments over the preceding year, plans for the 2027 budget process, and initial meetings with Finance counterparts in Susquehanna Valley as merger discernment continues.

Report of the Assistant to the Lead Presbyter

The written report of Rev. Mary Anderson, Assistant to the Lead Presbyter, was received for information. The report described work in Presbytery leadership support, committee participation, administration and communication, congregational and pastoral support, candidate support, event planning, church visits, and professional development.

Commissioning of General Assembly Commissioner

The Presbytery commissioned Rev. Eric Hergen-Wilson to serve as a teaching elder commissioner to the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The constitutional questions were asked, the Presbytery affirmed its support, and prayer was offered for the commissioner and the work of the General Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT

With the business of the Annual Meeting concluded, the Presbytery adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, Stated Clerk