
PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE

Annual Report of the Stated Clerk

June 13 2026

The Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye

Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse
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Statistics tell us where we’ve been. Faith tells us where we’re going.

What follows is an honest accounting of this presbytery in 2025 — who we are, how many we are, what we spent, and who we may be missing. The Stated Clerk offers it not as a verdict but as a starting point. The numbers belong to the past. The future belongs to faith.

A note before the data: an estimated eight congregations did not submit 2025 statistical reports, including at least one with membership exceeding 200 and another approaching 50. Their absence from this record does not mean their people are absent from the life of this presbytery. Part Two addresses what the full picture likely looks like. The Clerk will continue to press for complete reporting as a matter of basic accountability to one another.

PART ONE

Statistical Overview, 2025

Membership

Membership Movement	Count
Adjusted Beginning Membership	2,224
Gains — Certificate Transfer	17
Gains — Youth Professions	9
Gains — Professions & Reaffirmations	15
Total Gains	41
Losses — Certificate Transfer	16
Losses — Deaths	44
Losses — Deleted (Other Reason)	112
Total Losses	172

Membership Movement	Count
Total Ending Active Members	2,093

One hundred and twelve people were removed from our rolls for reasons other than death or transfer. Do we know why?

Worship and Congregational Presence

	Count
Average Weekly Worship Attendance	1,024
Friends of the Congregation	446
Ruling Elders on Session	181
Congregations with Deacons	19 of 26 reporting
Total Baptisms	23

Four hundred and forty-six people are close enough to call themselves Friends. What would it take for them to feel at home?

Age Distribution

Age Group	Members	% of Reported
17 & Under	20	1.2%
18 – 25	75	4.4%
26 – 40	150	8.7%
41 – 55	262	15.3%
56 – 70	517	30.1%
Over 70	694	40.4%
Total Reported	1,718	100%

Young people are present in our congregations. The data bears that out.

What are we building for them to inherit?

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Identity	Members	% of Reported
White	1,603	93.1%
Asian / Pacific Islander / South Asian	81	4.7%
Black / African American / African	17	1.0%
Hispanic / Latino-a	13	0.8%
Middle Eastern / North African	5	0.3%
Multiracial	1	<0.1%
Native American / Alaska Native / Indigenous	1	<0.1%
Total Reported	1,721	100%

This is who we are today. Is it who we intend to be?

Members with Disabilities

	Members
Hearing Impairment	117
Mobility Impairment	117
Sight Impairment	55
Other Impairment	58
Total	347

What does it mean to be a church where so many of our people are navigating the realities of age and disability? And are we building communities — and buildings — that meet them where they are?

Financial Overview

Budgeted income: \$4,144,092. Budgeted expenses: \$4,378,569.

Receipts	Amount
Regular Contributions	\$2,722,611
Investment Income	\$1,417,746
Capital Building Funds	\$1,170,400
Bequests	\$335,194
Other Income	\$339,033
Subsidy or Aid	\$65,865

Expenditures	Amount
Local Program	\$4,248,956
Capital Expenditures	\$335,107
Local Mission	\$204,584
Investment Expenditures	\$163,898
Per Capita Apportionment	\$112,598
Other Mission	\$63,541

Investment income and endowment draws now rival regular giving across the presbytery. What does it mean to be sustained by the generosity of people who are no longer with us?

PART TWO

Statistical Clarity: The Estimated Full Picture

The official statistics reflect what was reported. This section offers what the full picture likely looks like — with stated assumptions, honest limitations, and a clear distinction between what we know and what we are estimating. These figures are not submitted to the Office of the General Assembly. They are offered for the presbytery's own planning and discernment.

Assumptions:

Eight congregations did not report. Based on pastoral knowledge: one congregation ~200 members, one ~50 members, remaining six combined ~30 members. Total estimated missing: 280 members. Attendance and Friends of Congregation figures are projected using ratios from reporting congregations. Financial data is not adjusted — those figures are unknown and cannot be reliably estimated.

Membership: Reported vs. Estimated

Metric	As Reported	Estimated Full	Difference
Active Members	2,093	2,373	+280
Avg. Weekly Attendance	1,024	~1,161	+~137
Friends of Congregation	446	~506	+~60
Attendance-to-Member Ratio	48.9%	~48.9%	—
Per Capita (if current)	\$112,598	~\$127,661	+~\$15,063

The attendance ratio holds steady because the same ratio is applied to estimate missing attendance. The per capita figure assumes non-reporting congregations are current — whether they are is a question the Clerk's office is following up on.

What the Adjusted Picture Tells Us

A difference of 280 members does not transform the data. But it shifts the frame in a few meaningful ways.

- **The presbytery is larger than it looks** — At an estimated 2,373 members and ~1,161 average weekly worshippers, this is a body of real size and presence. The narrative of decline should not obscure that thousands of people are being gathered, served, and sent every week.
- **Non-reporting is a governance problem** — When roughly 12% of the presbytery's estimated membership is invisible to the statistical record, we cannot accurately assess our own health. This matters especially as we move toward merger with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery. We should treat complete reporting as a merger-readiness task.

- **The numbers we report are the numbers we are accountable for** — The numbers we do not report are the people we have stopped counting. In the household of God, everyone is counted.

Financial data is not adjusted in this section. Financial figures vary too widely by congregation to estimate reliably, and speculating on receipts or expenditures would not serve honest discernment.

PART THREE

From the Desk of the Stated Clerk

I want to tell you about a presbytery that is paying attention.

The deepening partnership with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery is one of the most encouraging things I have witnessed in this role. The decision by both Social Justice Committees to operate jointly — pooling energy and directing resources toward those who need them — is exactly the kind of movement that happens when people stop protecting institutional territory and start asking what the mission actually requires. I look forward to growing collaboration with SVP's co-clerks as merger conversations continue to take shape.

What strikes me most is not the structure of these conversations but the breadth of people showing up for them. Members across both presbyteries are engaged, curious, and willing — showing up to meetings, to forums, to hard conversations, and choosing together. That is the Reformed church doing what the Reformed church is supposed to do. That is, in the truest sense, quite Presbyterian.

The 227th General Assembly meets this year with a full and consequential docket. This presbytery has a voice in it.

The Clerk's office has been working to strengthen communication with congregations, including the development of digital Church Information Forms — a step toward information that is current, complete, and actually useful. Good governance requires good information. That work continues.

A brief word of accountability from the Clerk: we have not yet conducted a records review cycle. I regret that delay.

The work has not been forgotten, abandoned, or deemed unimportant. Church records tell the story of God's people. They preserve baptisms and memberships, elections and decisions, moments of joy and moments of grief. Long after we are gone, they help future generations understand who we were and how God was at work among us. Sessions should expect communication regarding records reviews over the summer, with reviews beginning no later than early fall. Thank you for your patience, and thank you for the care you take in maintaining the records entrusted to your congregation.

⚠ We need people willing to serve.

The presbytery has a serious and growing shortage of members willing to serve on administrative commissions and investigating committees. These are not optional. They are constitutional obligations. If we cannot staff them, we cannot function. Please consider whether you are being called to this work.

⚠ The Permanent Commission on Sexual Misconduct must be populated now.

This presbytery called for it. That was the right decision. A commission that exists on paper but has no members is not a commission. The safety of the people in our care depends on having a trained, constituted body ready to respond. This cannot wait.

Statistics tell us where we've been.

Faith tells us where we're going.

God's peace be with you.

The Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye

Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

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A Prayer for the Future of the Church

God of every season,

You have gathered this presbytery across generations of faithfulness — in small sanctuaries and large ones, in seasons of growth and seasons of grief, in the ordinary work of people who showed up and kept showing up. We give you thanks for all of it.

Bless our members — those whose names fill these pages and those whose names we have not yet learned. Bless the ones who are aging and the ones who are just arriving. Bless the ones who come every Sunday and the ones who stand at the edge, not yet sure they belong. Remind us that you have already decided they do.

Bless our leaders — pastors and elders, deacons and clerks, moderators and committees and the ones who serve without titles. Give them courage for the decisions that matter and humility for the ones that don't. Remind them that they were called, not appointed, and that the One who called them has not changed.

Bless our Friends — the four hundred and forty-six who are close enough to count themselves among us without yet counting themselves in. May they find in us a community worth belonging to.

As we move toward new configurations of partnership and mission — with neighbors, with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery, with the wider church — keep us from confusing our institutional survival with your mission. The church you are building does not look exactly like the one we have known. Help us trust that.

The statistics tell us where we have been. Faith — stubborn, persistent, Reformed faith — tells us where we are going. Lead us there — with open hands, with honest hearts, and with the stubborn hope that is the mark of your people in every age.

Amen.