

Combined Special Meeting of Cayuga-Syracuse & Susquehanna Valley Presbyteries

Date: August 14, 2025

Format: Zoom (online meeting)

Purpose: To consider leadership positions and compensation in the merger process

1. Orientation & Instructions

- Participants were instructed on how to use Zoom functions (raise hand, renaming to indicate presbytery, registration for PSV members).
- Voting procedures explained:
 - - Consensus votes: objections signaled by raised hands.
 - - Hand votes: yes/no tallied with electronic hands.
 - - Major votes: Zoom ballot, with separate tallies for each presbytery.

2. Call to Order

- Moderator Rev. Michael Hill (Cayuga-Syracuse) called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- Moderator Rev. Paul [Wharton U.P. Church] (Susquehanna Valley) co-led.

3. Opening Devotions

- Prayer offered by Rev. Hill.
- Land Acknowledgment: Recognition of Haudenosaunee land, historic injustices, and a call to stewardship and justice for all of God's children.

4. Clerks & Quorum

- Susquehanna Valley Stated Clerk: Rev. Chris Berger declared.
- Quorum confirmed for both presbyteries.

5. Corresponding Members

- Several individuals recognized as first-time commissioners or guests, including:
 - - Elder George Carruth (PSV, retired) recognized as guest.
 - - Mark [HR Committee] recognized as guest with voice.
 - - Rev. Paul Cliff (First Presbyterian, Bainbridge) welcomed as first-time commissioner.
- By consensus, corresponding members were granted voice.

6. Focus & Coordination Team Report

- Presented by Rev. Lori Cooney and Rev. Dave Johnson.
- Updates:
 - - Committee renamed from Vision Team to Focus & Coordination Team.
 - - Geneva Presbytery expressed interest in merger conversations (no formal vote yet).

- - Membership:
- * Cayuga-Syracuse: Rev. Steve Ite, Rev. Lori Cooney, Rev. Steve Plank.
- * Susquehanna Valley: Rev. Dave Johnson, Rev. Jeff Smith, Elder Robbie Jean Rice.
- * Geneva observers: Rev. Anita Milna, Rev. Connie Franks, Rev. David Ashby, Presbytery Leader Margie Ackerman.

7. Personnel & Finance Report

- a. Job Descriptions (HR Committees, presented by Elder Robert Peake):
- - Two positions considered: Presbytery Leader for Transformation (PLT), designated for Rev. Greg Garris; Assistant to the Presbytery Leader for Transformation, new 25-hour/week position.
- b. Compensation & Benefits (presented by Liz DeBall, HR Committee):
- - PLT salary set at mid-range of Synod data.
- - Benefits for PLT through transitional plan; covenant plan may apply in future.
- - Assistant salary prorated for 25 hours/week, with a \$6,000 range above/below midpoint.
- - Benefit questions pending based on candidate's needs (health insurance optional).
- - Funding: Costs to be split 50/50 between presbyteries. Synod grant support (held by PSV) may expire by end of 2025 or March 2026.
- c. Discussion Points Raised:
- - Whether assistant role qualifies as pastoral (study leave/vacation requirements).
- - Clarification that the assistant position is supportive, not pastoral.
- - Confirmation that both roles' terms may be adjusted as circumstances evolve.

8. Motions & Actions

- Motion 1: Approve Job Description & Compensation for PLT (Rev. Greg Garris)
- - Amendments (friendly): Start date October 1, 2025; Funding split 50/50 between presbyteries.
- - Vote: Passed in both presbyteries via Zoom ballot.
- - Action: Rev. Greg Garris confirmed as Presbytery Leader for Transformation.
- Motion 2: Approve Job Description & Compensation for Assistant PLT
- - Amendments: Hiring authority assigned to Joint HR/Personnel Committees (approved by separate vote); Start date October 1, 2025 (or as soon thereafter); 50/50 cost split between presbyteries.
- - Vote: Passed in both presbyteries via Zoom ballot.

9. Closing

- Closing remarks offered by moderators and members expressing gratitude for committee work.
- Prayer of Thanksgiving & Intercession led by Moderator Paul, including prayers for peace in Korea (coinciding with 80th anniversary of liberation from Japanese occupation).
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:06 p.m.

10. Acknowledgments

- Special thanks to the HR/Personnel Committees, Finance Committees, Tech Support, and the Focus & Coordination Team for preparation and leadership in the merger process.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk of Presbytery