Synod Stated Meeting
Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center
October 25-29, 2026

Opening Prayer – Coordinating Team Moderator Sharon Curry opened the Assembly with a morning devotion and prayer.

Welcome & Introductions –Synod Moderator Ron Fike called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. CT.

Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum – In accordance with the Bylaws, Sec. 3.1.3 whereby 50% or more of the elected commissioners constitutes a quorum, a quorum was declared by Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller. 20 of 26 Commissioners were present *(Attachment A)*.

Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors – Corresponding Members and Visitors were also acknowledged and seated. Sharon Curry moved and Edward Wolf seconded that the Corresponding Members and visitors by seated and given privileges of the floor. Motion carried *(Attachment A)*.

Adoption of the Agenda – With the meeting agenda presented, Ed Wolf moved and Sharon Curry seconded that the agenda be adopted. Motion carried *(Attachment B).*

Acknowledgement of Land & People – Joel Gill of Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center shared a land acknowledgment recognizing the Quapaw people as the original stewards of the land and honoring their history, culture, and continued presence as a sovereign Indigenous nation. The acknowledgment recognized the lasting consequences of their displacement and affirmed Ferncliff's commitment to responsible land stewardship, learning from Indigenous traditions, and caring for the land with humility and gratitude for future generations.

Approval of Minutes – Moderator Fike presented the minutes from the Spring 2026 Synod Assembly for approval. Approval of the minutes for the Stated Meeting were moved by Princeton Abaraoha and seconded by Sharon Curry. Motion carried *(Attachment C)*.

Greetings from the Co-Moderator of the General Assembly – The Rev. Marta Pomroy-Cordero, Co-Moderator of the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), brought greetings to the Synod of the Sun and reflected on the Assembly's theme, "Persevering Toward Wholeness." She highlighted significant actions addressing Christian nationalism, human rights, LGBTQ+ inclusion, immigration, healthcare, and artificial intelligence, while acknowledging challenges surrounding denominational restructuring and World Mission. She encouraged greater participation in the life and leadership of the church, emphasizing that meaningful connection comes through shared involvement. Looking ahead to the 228th General Assembly

in Puerto Rico, she invited Presbyterians to embrace the Co-Moderators' theme, "Be the Leaves," inspired by Revelation 22:2, calling the church to be a healing and hope-filled presence in the world.

Finance Report – In the absence of Synod Treasurer Bill Wiles, Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller presented the Finance Report. The report was presented in two parts, both included in Packet B. The first section reviewed the Synod's year-to-date financial report, while the second section addressed the preliminary 2027 budget *(Attachment D).*

Commissioners were invited to ask questions about the current financial report before moving to the proposed budget. With no questions, Ed Wolf moved the approval of the YTD financial report, Fred Bray seconded. The motion carried.

The preliminary 2027 budget was reviewed. While anticipated contributions from presbyteries and the Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Foundation provide a reliable estimate of funding, final amounts will not be confirmed until the end of 2026. Any necessary adjustments will be made early in the new year, with the final budget scheduled for approval at the February 2027 Synod meeting in Irving.

Human Resources Committee – Polly Williams reported on behalf of the committee and reflected on the Synod of the Sun's progress through a period of staffing challenges and leadership transitions. Polly expressed appreciation for the leadership of Scott Campbell and highlighted the growing sense of community, collaboration, and mutual support among Synod staff. While acknowledging opportunities for continued improvement and growth, the report emphasized the significant progress made and the positive spirit guiding the Synod's work *(Attachment E)*.

Coordinating Team Report – CT Chair Sharon Curry provided an overview of the Synod of the Sun's structure and leadership, explaining that the Synod includes commissioners from 11 presbyteries across Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Its work is carried out through the Permanent Judicial Commission, Grants and Scholarships Commission, and three committees: Connecting, Equipping, and Empowering. The Coordinating Team, composed of committee and commission moderators, oversees Synod operations, finances, administration, and committee work between the two annual assemblies. The report also highlighted the annual visioning process, which establishes goals for the coming year, and expressed appreciation for the dedication of Synod staff, commissioners, and committee leadership *(Attachment F)*.

The following individuals were nominated by the Coordinating Team for the following roles to be approved by the Assembly:

Synod Moderator:
2027-2029 - Ed Wolf (New Covenant)
2028-2030 Martha Bumpas (Tres Rios)

Synod Commissioners At-Large
Class of 2029 - Keven Wright (Pines)
Princeton Abaraoha (Grace)
Donita Nelson (Mission)

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Foundation
Class of 2028 – Dana Mayfield – Palo Duro
Class of 2029 – Eric Dittman – Mission
Class of 2029- Shannon Robertson – Pines
Class of 2029 – Gerry Tyer – Grace
Class of 2029 – Todd Freeman – Eastern OK
Class of 2029- Brett Hampton – New Covenant

Synod of the Sun Trustees
Class of 2028 - Jim Barker – TX – Mission
Class of 2028 – Dennis Laughlin – OK – Cimmaron
Class of 2028 – Kevin Wright – LA – Pines

Sharon highlighted the successful Commissioned Pastors and Small Church Leaders Retreat held at Camp Gilmont, a major initiative supporting the Synod's goal of connecting, equipping, and empowering small church leaders. The retreat brought together participants from all four Synod states, denominational leaders, and ministry partners for workshops, worship, fellowship, and opportunities to build relationships. Plans are underway for another retreat, September 13–17, 2027, along with efforts to reactivate the Commissioned Pastors Network.

At the end of the report, Sharon reflected on ten years of service in various Synod leadership roles, expressing gratitude for the dedication of commissioners, staff, and covenant partners. She concluded with a reminder that no one serves in ministry alone and that the Synod's greatest strength lies in its connections and shared support.

Greeting from the Stewardship and Funds Development Team – Representatives from the PC(USA) Stewardship and Funds Development team, Lenuel García Arroyo and Jason Smith, shared updates on denominational giving and resources available to congregations and mid councils. They highlighted the transition from four Special Offerings to three—One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Offering, and Christmas Joy Offering—while emphasizing that all previously supported ministries and causes continue to receive funding. The report outlined

how these offerings support disaster assistance, poverty alleviation, racial and gender justice, peacemaking, leadership development, and assistance for church workers. They also introduced the redesigned Pillars Community program, which encourages recurring financial support for the church's mission. Congregations and presbyteries were encouraged to take advantage of available grants, promotional resources, and stewardship support while continuing their generous participation in the mission of the PC(USA).

Connecting Committee - Polly Williams reported on the Connecting Committee's efforts to strengthen relationships with the Synod's covenant partners. The committee is developing a clearer definition of covenant partnership and a process for establishing new partnerships. Williams celebrated the committee's increased participation and engagement, noting the addition of new covenant partners and the renewal of existing agreements. She also expressed appreciation for the approval of a liaison to strengthen connections between the Synod and the University of the Ozarks, emphasizing the importance of relationships and collaboration in the Synod's ministry *(Attachment G)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center – Joel Gill of Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center shared highlights of its ministries and programs during 2026. More than 100 children participated in its nature preschool, while approximately 1,000 campers attended summer programs serving presbyteries in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Ferncliff's Disaster Assistance Center, established following Hurricane Katrina, continued its vital ministry, distributing more than 113,000 pounds of disaster relief kits this year and welcoming mission teams for service opportunities. Ferncliff also hosted the Board of Pensions' CREDO programs and other church gatherings. A major highlight was the restoration of a natural stream following the removal of an aging dam and deteriorating lake, reflecting Ferncliff's commitment to creation care. The project is part of the ongoing Connect, Inspire, Transform campaign, which has also supported facility renovations and improvements to the camp's infrastructure *(Attachment H)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Gilmont Camp and Conference Center – Crosby Fleming, Program Director at Gilmont Camp and Conference Center, shared the camp's history, growth, and commitment to creating a welcoming space where people can grow closer to God, creation, others, and themselves. The report highlighted Gilmont's Circle of Friends program for families of children with disabilities, specialized summer camps, and year-round retreats focused on faith formation, community, and spiritual renewal. Crosby also reflected on how Gilmont

overcame significant financial and leadership challenges through hospitality, renewed leadership, and a revitalized mission. Recent developments include a new $6 million lodge and expanded retreat opportunities for all ages, including silent retreats during Advent and Lent. The report emphasized Gilmont's commitment to providing a sacred space where people can connect, find rest, and experience spiritual growth.

On behalf of the Connecting Committee, Polly Williams moved that Gilmont Camp and Conference Center become a Covenant Partner with the Synod of the Sun. The motion carried *(Attachment I)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy - The Rev. Dennis Hysom, representing the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies, provided an overview of his role endorsing and supporting chaplains serving in the military, Veterans Affairs, federal prisons, Coast Guard, and related organizations. Working with four denominations, including the PC(USA), he oversees the endorsement process in partnership with presbyteries, ensuring chaplains meet professional and denominational requirements. He emphasized the importance of ongoing training, family support, and pastoral care for chaplains serving in demanding environments. Hysom also highlighted efforts to connect retiring chaplains with congregations and other ministry opportunities, recognizing the valuable experience and leadership they bring to the church. He encouraged presbyteries to contact him regarding chaplain endorsements, recruitment, and potential ministry placements *(Attachment J)*.

On behalf of the Connecting Committee, Polly Williams moved that Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy become a Covenant Partner with the Synod of the Sun. The motion carried.

Covenant Partner Reports: Project Vida – The Rev. Tim Davenport-Herbst, CEO of Project Vida, introduced the organization as a new covenant partner of the Synod of the Sun, highlighting nearly 60 years of Presbyterian involvement in ministry along the El Paso borderlands. Project Vida operates a $27 million network of community services addressing healthcare, affordable housing, economic development, and education. Its ministries include six health clinics serving more than 12,000 patients annually, affordable housing programs, small business lending, bilingual psychiatric training, early childhood education, and school-based healthcare services. Davenport-Herbst emphasized Project Vida's commitment to developing programs in response to community-identified needs rather than imposing outside solutions. He celebrated the new covenant partnership as an affirmation of the church's commitment to health, economic justice, and community well-being, inviting presbyteries and congregations to participate in this ongoing ministry.

On behalf of the Connecting Committee, Polly Williams moved that Project Vida Health Center become a Covenant Partner with the Synod of the Sun. The motion carried.

Covenant Partner Reports: Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services – Nathan Chanel, CEO of Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services, shared an overview of the organization's 103-year ministry serving children in Arkansas's foster care and juvenile justice systems. Through the composite story of a young resident named Alex, he illustrated how consistent care, therapeutic support, education, and workforce training help young people overcome trauma, develop trust, and envision a hopeful future. Vera Lloyd currently serves approximately 52 residents and is exploring opportunities to expand its residential capacity. The report highlighted its independent living programs, vocational partnerships with local businesses, and educational opportunities that prepare young adults for life beyond residential care. Chanel also described Vera Lloyd's free, statewide training program for foster parents and expressed gratitude for the continued support of Presbyterian congregations and ministry partners. He emphasized that the organization's mission is not simply to provide a safe home, but to equip young people with the confidence, skills, and relationships needed to build independent and fulfilling lives *(Attachment K)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Tres Rios Border Foundation – Marta Pumroy-Cordero, Co-Moderator of General Assembly and Border Ministry Coordinator for the Tres Rios Border Ministry Foundation shared an overview of its mission to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterian congregations in ministry along the U.S.–Mexico border. Through border encounters, educational resources, and community partnerships, the foundation helps participants better understand immigration, migration, and the realities of life in the El Paso–Ciudad Juárez region. Current ministries include prayer vigils, advocacy for individuals in immigration detention, citizenship education, food assistance, and support for migrant shelters and their leaders. The report highlighted partnerships with Abara and local organizations, as well as a migrant-led faith community in Ciudad Juárez that provides worship, fellowship, and outreach to vulnerable families. Emphasizing accompaniment rather than directing ministry from the outside, the foundation invited congregations and presbyteries to participate in border encounters, educational opportunities, and ongoing partnerships *(Attachment L)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Evergreen Life Services - Yvonne Smith and Kathey Crow of Evergreen Life Services shared highlights of the organization's 67-year ministry serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Founded in 1959 through the

efforts of Presbyterian leaders in Louisiana, Evergreen has grown from serving four young men to supporting more than 1,000 individuals across seven states. Its programs include residential care, supported independent living, community-based services, and foster care for children in Tennessee. The presenters emphasized Evergreen's commitment to helping individuals achieve greater independence, dignity, and meaningful participation in their communities. They also reflected on Evergreen's longstanding Presbyterian connections, including its role in supporting Camp Gilmont during a difficult financial period. Congregations and individuals were encouraged to reconnect with Evergreen's mission through volunteering, financial support, and advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities *(Attachment M)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Texas Presbyterian Foundation - Stephanie Marsden, Director of Ministry Services for the Texas Presbyterian Foundation (TPF), celebrated the foundation's 100th anniversary and its longstanding commitment to supporting Presbyterian ministries. Founded in 1925 with a $1,000 gift from First Presbyterian Church of Waco, TPF has grown to manage approximately $1.7 billion in investments, helping congregations and institutions expand their mission and ministry. Marsden emphasized that TPF's work extends beyond investment management to include stewardship education, planned giving, and helping individuals and congregations create lasting legacies through their financial resources, time, and talents. She also introduced Kelly Abraham as TPF's new President and CEO and announced plans to expand educational resources and seminars for church leaders. Marsden encouraged commissioners and ministry partners to connect with TPF for assistance with stewardship and legacy giving.

Covenant Partner Reports: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - The Rev. Jim Reinards, a retired pastor from Grace Presbytery and volunteer with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), shared an overview of PDA's ministries and three lessons learned through years of disaster response: caregivers need care, disasters expose underlying community inequities, and hospitality provides a safe harbor during times of crisis. Drawing on experiences following the California wildfires and Hurricanes Matthew and Harvey, Reinards emphasized the importance of emotional and spiritual care, equitable recovery efforts, and long-term accompaniment of disaster survivors. During the first half of 2026, PDA awarded 84 grants totaling $2.5 million, deployed 43 National Response Team members, and supported disaster recovery efforts in 24 countries. Reinards encouraged congregations and presbyteries to support PDA through prayer, volunteering, disaster preparedness, and financial contributions, emphasizing the church's commitment to remaining with communities throughout the long process of recovery.

Communications Services Plan Report - Thomas Riggs, Director of the Synod of the Sun's Communication Services Plan (CSP), reported on another busy year supporting Presbyterian ministry partners through website development, newsletters, social media, and other communication services. In 2026, CSP welcomed two new partners, the Presbyteries of South Alabama and Florida, developed communications for the newly formed Snake River Presbytery, and expanded services for existing partners. The program also provided continuity for several presbyteries navigating leadership transitions. Riggs expressed special appreciation for communications contractor Lindsay Freeman-McCarthy, who successfully managed all aspects of CSP during his sabbatical, ensuring uninterrupted service. Looking ahead to 2027, CSP will evaluate its pricing structure, services, and staffing needs to ensure the program remains sustainable and responsive to the evolving communication needs of its ministry partners *(Attachment N)*.

Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report - The Synod Leader reflected on a busy and productive year of ministry, highlighting visits to presbyteries, preaching opportunities, and efforts to strengthen relationships throughout the Synod of the Sun. A particular priority has been rebuilding fellowship, cooperation, and meaningful connections with the Synod's covenant partners, many of whom were represented at the Assembly. While acknowledging challenges during the year, including a covenant relationship that did not develop as anticipated, the Synod Leader expressed optimism about future opportunities. The report emphasized gratitude for the hospitality and support received from presbyteries and ministry partners and a continued commitment to strengthening relationships across the Synod. The Synod Leader also welcomed invitations to preach in congregations when attending presbytery meetings *(Attachment O)*.

Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery Report - The Rev. Libby Janes, Director of the Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR), reported significant progress in strengthening disaster preparedness and response across the Synod's 11 presbyteries. Eight presbyteries now have functioning disaster response teams, with efforts underway to establish teams in the remaining three. Janes introduced a new adaptable disaster preparedness plan for congregations and announced a four-week online training series beginning in January. Since February, SPDR has facilitated more than $242,000 in assistance to churches and presbyteries, with additional support provided directly between congregations. She highlighted ongoing recovery needs following flooding in Kerrville and Uvalde, volunteer opportunities through Mo-Ranch, and local initiatives to assemble and store disaster cleanup buckets for immediate use. Janes encouraged commissioners to recruit volunteers, support disaster team funding, and

strengthen connections so congregations can respond quickly and compassionately when disasters strike *(Attachment P)*.

Equipping Committee Report – On behalf of the Equipping Committee, Molly Casteel reported on the committee's progress in establishing a clearer sense of purpose and identifying specific initiatives aligned with three of the Synod's priorities. Over the past year, the committee has focused particular attention on listening to congregations and presbyteries about their approaches to ruling elder training. As part of this effort, the committee is developing a series of SunSpots podcast episodes highlighting creative solutions and successful practices in elder training throughout the Synod. The committee, currently consisting of approximately 12 to 13 members, continues to welcome additional participants. Meeting monthly via Zoom, the Equipping Committee remains committed to identifying practical resources, sharing effective ministry practices, and strengthening leadership development across the Synod *(Attachment Q)*.

Empowering Committee Report - Empowering Committee Chair Leah McFadden reported a busy year supporting border ministries, ministry networks, disaster preparedness, and youth leadership. The committee distributed funding to the Hispanic Mission Ministries Network, Synod Youth Workshop, and other ministry partners, including the Tres Rios Border Ministry Foundation. It also approved $3,000 for a Synod-wide initiative to assemble and position disaster cleanup buckets for rapid response. A highlight of the report was the 2026 Synod Youth Workshop at the University of Tulsa, which welcomed 138 participants from 26 churches and seven presbyteries. More than $12,000 in scholarships helped make attendance possible, while youth participated in worship, small groups, and service projects benefiting 12 Tulsa nonprofits. The 2027 Synod Youth Workshop is scheduled for July 12–17 at the University of Tulsa, with the Rev. Libby Janes serving as keynote speaker *(Attachment R)*.

Lisa Almon of the Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN) reported significant progress toward strengthening Hispanic and multicultural Presbyterian ministries across the region. While acknowledging challenges, including a decline from 35 congregations to 23, the network celebrated two new worshiping communities in Arkansas and Texas. Major accomplishments included launching a new website, establishing online giving through the Synod, and receiving a $20,000 grant from Mission Presbytery to improve congregational websites. HMMN also expanded workshops beyond Central Texas, strengthened its presence at presbytery meetings, and hosted gatherings including its annual meeting at Austin Seminary and the Hispanic Presbyterian Women's Conference. Changes to the network's bylaws now allow representation from all 11 presbyteries, welcoming participants regardless of Spanish-language proficiency.

The network expressed gratitude for the Synod's continued support and emphasized its commitment to building connections and nurturing thriving Hispanic ministries *(Attachment S)*.

The Rev. Dr. Carlos Baladez reported on efforts to rebuild relationships between the Synod of the Sun and the Presbyterian Church in Mexico following a separation more than a decade ago. Although the Mexican church is currently unable to establish a formal covenant agreement, its leadership expressed a desire to continue developing a fraternal relationship rooted in Christian fellowship and cooperation. Baladez announced plans to visit Mexico in April 2027 to lead workshops based on the Hispanic Ministries Mission Network's "Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today" initiative, which equips congregational leaders to serve churches without full-time pastors. He also discussed plans to translate Austin Seminary's Houses of Hope curriculum into Spanish to support leadership development in smaller congregations. Baladez encouraged the Synod to consider dedicated funding for border ministries, emphasizing the opportunities for collaboration, reconciliation, and shared ministry across national boundaries.

Jerry Boles shared plans for a new initiative tentatively called "Empowering the Pews," designed to strengthen connections between the Synod's ministries and local congregations. Recognizing that much of the important work shared at Synod assemblies rarely reaches church members, the committee is exploring ways to use existing communication technology to bring these stories directly to Presbyterians in the pews. Beginning as early as Lent 2027, the initiative could offer interactive Zoom gatherings where congregations and small groups can hear directly from ministry leaders, ask questions, and learn about opportunities for involvement. Border ministries may be the first focus, with additional ministries featured in future gatherings. The committee emphasized that meaningful connections already exist throughout the Synod and that this initiative would help congregations discover, strengthen, and participate in those relationships.

Grants and Scholarships Commission – Polly Williams from the Grants and Scholarships Commission expressed appreciation for its dedicated members and the generosity of those whose gifts have made the Synod's grant and scholarship programs possible. The commission reported awarding an additional $23,000 in grants during its third-quarter review, supporting ministries and initiatives throughout the Synod. Meeting quarterly, the commission carefully evaluates requests while honoring donor restrictions, established precedents, and its responsibility to represent the interests of the entire Synod. The commission emphasized the collaborative nature of its work, recognizing how members bring different perspectives and insights to the grant review process. With another promising slate of requests anticipated for 2027, the commission remains committed to responsible stewardship and supporting ministries that strengthen the mission and witness of the Presbyterian Church *(Attachment T)*.

Committee on Representation – On behalf of the Committee on Representation, Princeton Abaraoha and Molly Casteel presented plans to revitalize its work under the theme "From Representation to Belonging." The committee emphasized the importance of ensuring that all Presbyterians, particularly those from historically marginalized communities, have meaningful opportunities to participate in church leadership and decision-making. The Synod's approved 2027 budget includes $18,000 for a one-year Data Equity Project and $7,000 to support revitalizing the committee. Working with experts from the Synod's covenant partners, the project will develop new methods for collecting and evaluating demographic and participation data while prioritizing privacy, self-identification, and data security. The committee hopes these tools will help identify barriers to participation, strengthen accountability, and promote greater equity throughout the Synod. The initiative may also provide a model for other governing bodies across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *(Attachment U)*.

Coordinating Team Report - The Nominating Committee presented an additional nomination for service on a board of trustees. Rosario Zapico Escobido was nominated to serve on the Pan American School board, with the nomination coming directly from the committee and therefore requiring no second. The motion passed.

Covenant Partner Reports: Trinity University – Alex Serna-Wallender, University Chaplain and holder of the E.W. Jones Chair of Ministry at Trinity University in San Antonio, shared updates on the institution's continued growth and spiritual life. Founded by Presbyterians in 1869, Trinity renewed its covenant partnership with the Synod of the Sun in 2025. The university received nearly 12,000 applications, enrolled 661 new students, and reported that more than 60% of graduates leave without student debt. A $6 million renovation of Margaret B. Parker Chapel will create the Jud Center for Spiritual Life and Formation, featuring new gathering spaces, prayer rooms, and improved accessibility. The university's "Know Your Neighbor" initiative encourages community-building through dialogue, service, and personal connections. Additional programs include paid summer internships with local faith communities and the new "Be a Neighbor" initiative, which attracted nearly 150 participants for one-on-one conversations designed to foster meaningful relationships across campus *(Attachment V)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Schreiner University – Following a brief report from Synod Leader Mitch Miller on behalf of Schreiner University and an information video submitted by Schreiner was played for the Assembly, Polly Williams moved on behalf of the Connecting Committee that

that the Synod of the Sun renew its covenant relationship with the University. The motion carried *(Attachment W)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Austin College - John Williams, Chaplain and Director of Church Relations at Austin College, shared updates on the college's continuing partnership with the Synod of the Sun. The college will inaugurate its 17th president, Dr. Rebecca Cantor, on November 13. Williams highlighted the Westminster Scholars program, which currently supports 83 students through generous scholarships for Presbyterians and dependents of PC(USA) church professionals. He also celebrated the Activators program, which has involved 684 students since 1995, providing leadership for ministry events and inspiring many participants to pursue seminary and professional ministry. Austin College is collaborating with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on a Lilly Endowment-funded initiative supporting vocational discernment through the arts. Williams also welcomed the Synod's new partnership with the college's Student Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation (SEPA) program, which will provide a student grant-writing intern to assist Synod ministries *(Attachment X)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Lyon College - Representatives of Lyon College shared updates on the institution's expansion into graduate education and its commitment to addressing healthcare needs in Arkansas. Dr. Melissa Taverner, College President, told of the college's School of Dental Medicine in Little Rock welcomed its first students in 2025 and has opened a public clinic offering affordable dental care, with plans to expand services for patients with special needs. Lyon is also developing a veterinary medicine program in Cabot, with its first class anticipated in 2027, pending accreditation. Both initiatives emphasize hands-on education and community service. Vice President for Advancement Bailey Faulkner highlighted "Give Veterans a Smile," a student-inspired initiative scheduled for November 10 to provide dental care to veterans who lack adequate coverage. The college hopes to raise $30,000 to support the event and its patient assistance fund, helping make essential dental services accessible to those who might otherwise go without care.

Covenant Partner Reports: Presbyterian Pan American School - The Rev. Dory Hjalmarson, newly appointed Chaplain at Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas, shared updates on the school's international ministry and educational achievements. The Presbyterian boarding school currently serves 40 students from Mexico, Colombia, Rwanda, and South Korea, preparing them for higher education in the United States while nurturing their spiritual development. Hjalmarson highlighted the school's second consecutive statewide academic

championship, an impressive achievement for the smallest school in the competition. Challenges include declining enrollment and visa denials affecting approximately one-third of prospective students over the past two years. The school is strengthening partnerships with Schreiner University and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary through the Arc of Ministry initiative, helping students explore vocational and ministry callings. Halmerson also expressed gratitude for the Synod's financial support of the chaplaincy position and invited Presbyterians to visit the school and engage with its mission *(Attachment Y)*.

Covenant Partner Reports: Presbyterian Mo Ranch Assembly - Tim Huchton, President and CEO of Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly in Hunt, Texas, shared how the retreat and conference center continues to serve 35,000–36,000 guests annually through camps, retreats, and 27 yearly conferences and events. He reflected on the devastating floods of July 2025 and July 2026, which brought significant loss to the surrounding community and more than $2 million in financial challenges for Mo-Ranch. Despite these hardships, Mo-Ranch provided more than $200,000 in complimentary lodging and meals for first responders and continues supporting recovery efforts through partnerships with the Synod of the Sun and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Huchton expressed gratitude for the churches, donors, and volunteers whose generosity has sustained the ministry. Through personal stories of campers and first responders finding peace and spiritual renewal at Mo-Ranch, he emphasized its enduring mission of hospitality, belonging, and creating sacred space where people can encounter God and strengthen their communities.

With thanks to the participants of the Assembly by Moderator Ron Fike, he ended the business meeting with a closing prayer.

Attachment A

Synod of the Sun

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Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center

Commissioners Present

Princeton	**Abaraoha**	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Lisa	**Almon**	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Margaret	**Alsup**	Presbytery of Arkansas	Commissioner
Carlos	**Baladez**	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Jerry	**Bowles**	Palo Duro Presbytery	Commissioner
Fred	**Bray**	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Commissioner
Molly	**Casteel**	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Commissioner
Stacy	**Clopton**	Palo Duro Presbytery	Commissioner
Laurel	**Cockrill**	Indian Nations Presbytery	Commissioner
Sharon	**Curry**	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Ronald	**Fike**	Cimarron Presbytery	Commissioner
Dennis	**Laughlin**	Cimarron Presbytery	Commissioner
Leah	**McFadden**	Presbytery of New Covenant	Commissioner
John	**McKinnon**	Indian Nations Presbytery	Commissioner
Danita	**Nelson**	Mission Presbytery	Commissioner
Karen	**Rogers**	Presbytery of the Pines	Commissioner
Sandra	**Watson**	Presbytery of the Pines	Commissioner
Polly	**Willilams**	Grace Presbytery	Commissioner
Edward	**Wolf**	Presbytery of New Covenant	Commissioner

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Corresponding Members Present

Blake	**Brinegar**	Presbytery of Arkansas	Corresponding Member
Gordon	**Edwards**	Cimarron Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Julia	**Farrell**	Presbytery of the Pines	Corresponding Member
Sharon	**Fortin**	Presbytery of South Louisiana	Corresponding Member
Lynn	**Hargrove**	Presbytery of New Covenant	Corresponding Member
Leigh	**McCaslin**	Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Matt	**Miles**	Tres Rios Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Bobby	**Musengwa**	Mission Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Laurie	**Palmer**	Mission Presbytery	Corresponding Member
Katrina	**Richardson**	Cimarron Presbytery	Corresponding Member
David	**Stipp-Bethune**	Presbytery of the Pines	Corresponding Member
Kyle	**Walker**	Grace Presbytery	Corresponding Member

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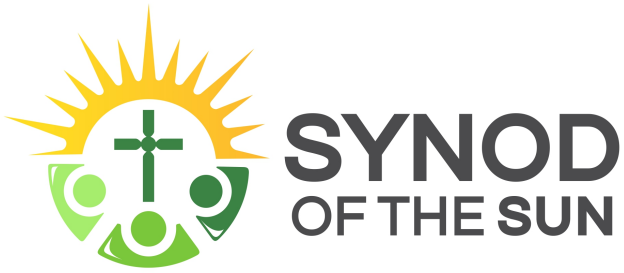
Requesting Excused Absence

Martha Bumpas	Tres Rios Presbytery	Commissioner

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Other Persons Present

James	**Reinharz**	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	Covenant Partner
Crosby	**Fleming**	Gilmont Camp & Conference Center	Covenant Partner
Stefanie	**Marsden**	Texas Presbyterian Foundation	Covenant Partner
Yvonne	**Smith**	Evergreen Life Services	Covenant Partner
Cathey	**Crow**	Evergreen Life Services	Covenant Partner
John	**Williams**	Austin College	Covenant Partner
Tim	**Davenport-Herbst**	Project Vida	Covenant Partner
Marci	**Bynum-Robertson**	Vera Lloyd Family Services	Covenant Partner
Tim	**Huchton**	Presbyterian Mo Ranch Assembly	Covenant Partner
Dennis	**Hysom**	Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies	Covenant Partner
Dori	**Hjalmarson**	Presbyterian Pan American School	Covenant Partner
Alex	**Serna-Wallender**	Trinity University	Covenant Partner
Melissa	**Taverner**	Lyon College	Covenant Partner
Bailey	**Faulkner**	Lyon College	Covenant Partner
Joel	**Gill**	Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center	Covenant Partner
Lemuel	**Garcia-Arroyo**	Mission Presbytery	Institution/Agency Representative
Jason	**Smith**		Institution/Agency Representative
Marta	**Pumroy-Cordero**	Tres Rios Presbytery	PC(USA) Co-Moderator

Other Persons Present

Libby	**Janes**	Mission Presbytery	Synod Staff
Mitchell	**Miller**	Indian Nations Presbytery	Synod Staff
Thomas	**Riggs**	Other/None	Synod Staff
Tammy	**Stepka**	Grace Presbytery	Synod Staff

Attachment B

Synod of the Sun

2026 Fall Assembly | October 26-29

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, AR



Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, October 26

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer	Synod Moderator, Ron Fike
Declaration of Quorum	
Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors	
Adoption of Agenda	
Acknowledgement of Land & People	
Approval of Spring Stated Assembly Minutes	
Finance Report	Bill Wiles, Treasurer
BREAK and Assignment of Afternoon Groups	
HR Committee Report	
Coordinating Team Report	Sharon Curry, Moderator
– Nominations	
Greetings and Updates from the Office of Stewardship and Funds Development	Lemuel Garcia and Jason Smith
Greeting from the Co-Moderator of the General Assembly	Marta Pumroy-Cordero
Committee Reports	
– Connecting	Polly Williams, Moderator
LUNCH	

Synod of the Sun

2026 Fall Assembly | October 26-29

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, AR

Proposed Agenda - Tuesday, October 26

Covenant Partner Reports

Ferncliff	
Gilmont	
Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy	
NOROC	
Tres Rios Border Foundation	Marta Pumroy-Cordero
Project Vida	
Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services	
Evergreen Life Services	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation	
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	

Synod of the Sun

2026 Fall Assembly | October 26-29

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, AR

Proposed Agenda - Wednesday, October 28

Plenary Continues	
Communications Services Plan	Thomas Riggs, Director
Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report	Mitch Miller
Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery	Libby Janes, Director
Committee/Commission Reports	
Equipping	Molly Casteel, Moderator
Empowering	Leah Lynch McFadden
Grants and Scholarships	Polly Williams
Committee on Representation	Molly Casteel and Princeton Abaraoha
LUNCH	

Synod of the Sun

2026 Fall Assembly | October 26-29

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, AR

Proposed Agenda - Wednesday, October 28

Covenant Partner Reports

South Central Region of the Association of Presbyterian Educators
Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest
Solar Under the Sun
Austin College
Lyon College
Presbyterian Pan American School
Trinity University
University of the Ozarks
Schreiner University
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Synod of the Sun

2026 Fall Assembly | October 26-29

Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, AR

Proposed Agenda - Thursday, October 29

Plenary Continues	
Closing Worship and Installation of New Moderator	
LUNCH	

Attachment C

2026 Spring Stated Meeting Minutes To Be Approved

Synod Stated Meeting
Presbyterian Mission Center | Irving, TX
February 23-24, 2026

Opening Prayer – Synod Vice Moderator Karen Rogers opened the Assembly with prayer.

Welcome & Introductions –Synod Moderator Ron Fike called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. CT.

Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum – In accordance with the Bylaws, Sec. 3.1.3 whereby 50% or more of the elected commissioners constitutes a quorum, a quorum was declared by Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller. 22 of 26 Commissioners were present *(Attachment A)*.

Seating of Corresponding Members & Visitors – Corresponding Members and Visitors were also acknowledged and seated. Polly Williams moved and Sharon Curry seconded that the Corresponding Members and visitors by seated and given privileges of the floor. Motion carried *(Attachment A)*.

Adoption of the Agenda – With the meeting agenda presented, Ed Wolf moved and Sharon Curry seconded that the agenda be adopted. Motion carried *(Attachment B).*

Acknowledgement of Land & People – Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Mitch Miller called the Assembly to acknowledgment and honor the Indigenous peoples of the Trinity River Basin, naming tribes such as the Caddo, Wichita, Waco, Kichai, Tawakoni, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Cherokee, and others—both known and unknown—who were the original stewards of the land. Miller called the Assembly to recognize their deep connection to the area and called the Assembly to remember that we are neither the first nor the last to inhabit this place. Miller encouraged a spirit of reverence, gratitude, and shared responsibility, reminding us that as current stewards, we are entrusted to care for the land in ways that honor those who came before and those who will come after.

Approval of Minutes – Moderator Fike presented the minutes from the previous Synod Assembly on October 27, 2025 for approval. Approval of the minutes for the Stated Meeting were moved by Ben Davidson and seconded by Dennis Laughlin. Motion carried *(Attachment C)*.

Commissioner Orientation and Training – Mitch Miller, Ron Fike, and Communication and Administration Coordinator Thomas Riggs led the Assembly in a Commissioner Orientation, including information about Synod operations, a tour of the Synod website, and expectations for Commissioners. Following the presentation, the Assembly went into Committee Meetings.

2026 Spring Stated Meeting Minutes To Be Approved

Adoption of 2026 Budget – Synod Treasurer Bill Wiles presented the 2026 budget, emphasizing education and transparency. The core principle guiding spending is that it should reflect the organization's priorities: equipping, connecting, and empowering presbyteries. The budget has three parts: unrestricted income, reserve funds, and foundation-restricted funds. Major income comes from the Presbyterian Synod of the Sun Foundation and related programs. Some funds previously distributed from the Texas Presbyterian Foundation are now left invested to grow.

Expenditures have increased due to new staff, expanded ministry programs, grants, scholarships, travel, and improved financial clarity. While the operating budget shows a $57,000 deficit, including reserve and investment income, the overall net position is a surplus of about $113,000, so the organization is not running a deficit.

Bill highlighted that the invested funds have grown significantly, allowing for potential large, sustainable projects even beyond the current budget. Contributions from presbyteries are down, but the Synod returns roughly double what it receives to support mission and ministry. Bill encouraged thinking in terms of abundance rather than scarcity, emphasizing strategic generosity and alignment with organizational priorities *(Attachment D)*.

Communication Services Plan – Thomas Riggs reported on the CSP Program. Since its launch in 2018, the Synod of the Sun's Communications Services Program has supported mid-councils with websites, newsletters, and social media at below-market cost, fostering true ministerial partnerships. Initially intended for smaller presbyteries, the program proved valuable to larger ones and eventually expanded nationwide, serving synods and presbyteries across the PC(USA). By 2026, responsibilities have been streamlined—Lindsay Freeman-McCarthy focusing on website design and Thomas on newsletters and social media—improving efficiency and impact. Plans include transitioning Lindsay to part-time staff and hiring temporary support during the Tom's two-month sabbatical. The program continues to thrive, be budget-positive, and remains a growing gift to the denomination, fulfilling the vision planted in 2018 *(Attachment E)*.

Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery – SPDR Director Libby Janes reported on the program. Libby reflected on the morning's disaster preparedness training, highlighting it as a strong example of Synod partnership and encouraging presbyteries and congregations to invite similar training. She emphasizes her availability for conversation, support, and on-site visits, inviting open communication about local needs and strengths.

Broadening the definition of disaster beyond weather events, she explains that disasters include any disruption requiring outside support. Churches play a vital role in humanitarian response, especially during stressful times such as political polarization or government shutdowns. She shared Arkansas Presbytery's example, where the disaster team assessed needs during a benefits suspension and distributed $21,000 in grants to support overwhelmed food ministries.

She outlined how the Synod partners with organizations like VOAD and the Red Cross, shares information with presbyteries, and encourages a full communication loop so local churches can report needs back to leadership. She also reviewed available disaster grants, including immediate response grants, long-term recovery grants, church damage assistance, and faith leader resilience support. Emotional and spiritual care is identified as a growing focus, with churches uniquely positioned to offer prayer, counseling referrals, and trauma support. The overall message invites collaboration, communication, and proactive engagement in disaster ministry *(Attachment F)*.

Synod Leader/Stated Clerk Report – Mitch Miller provided updates and outlines key priorities for 2026. Following a leadership retreat at Mo-Ranch, the Synod identified focused priorities for the coming year, recognizing limited time and resources and aiming to concentrate efforts for greater impact *(Attachment G)*.

Priorities for 2026 include strengthening support for commissioners through expanded online resources and clearer guidance for nominating committees; continuing to support commissioned pastors and small congregations through "Flourishing in the Spirit"; increasing attendance at Synod Youth Workshop by 20%, especially in underserved presbyteries; improving officer training; and building fully functioning committees by inviting gifted individuals (even non-commissioners) to serve as co-opted members. The Synod will also begin updating its operations manual for the first time in 12 years, continue supporting Hispanic Ministry Network (HMMN) and Synod Presbyterian Disaster Response (SPDR), and emphasize spiritual growth so the Synod becomes a more prayerful, spiritually grounded body.

Finally, Mitch introduced a tentative covenant agreement between the Synod of the Sun (PCUSA) and the Noroeste Synod of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. The agreement renews and updates a previous partnership, developed through recent conversations and meetings, and is now ready for consideration and approval by both synods. Mitch invited Commissioner Carlos Baladez, who has been helping with the covenant agreement, to speak about the ongoing work *(Attachment H)*.

Carlos brought greetings from Mexico and shared the story behind the proposed renewed covenant with the Noroeste Synod of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico.

He explained that the updated covenant builds on the previous agreement, keeping meaningful elements while revising outdated portions. Both English and Spanish versions have been carefully translated and mutually reviewed. The Mexican synod is not seeking financial support but rather a restored relationship grounded in unity in Christ—one that transcends borders, language, culture, and politics.

Both Synods hope for collaborative partnership: shared seminary exchanges, pulpit exchanges, mutual learning, and cooperative ministry on equal footing with mutual respect. Carlos believes this as a Spirit-led opportunity for reconciliation and shared mission. Carlos urged the body to prayerfully consider approving the covenant as a step toward renewed unity in the body of Christ.

Following his presentation, the Proposed Covenant Partnership Agreement between the Synod of the Sun and El Sínodo Nacional del Noroeste was moved. The motion was approved *(Attachment I)*.

Coordinating Team - CT Chair Sharon Curry thanked the members of the Coordinating Team for their diligent work and encouraged the Assembly to read the written report on the decisions made by CT on behalf of the Assembly. Sharon brought a motion to the Assembly for the approval of the following individuals to serve:

Nominating Task Force
Meg Garver, Presbyterian Women
Jesse Gonzales, Presbytery of Arkansas
Loretta Credo, Presbytery of South Louisiana
Kristi Rodgers, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery
Seth Saathoff, New Covenant Presbytery

Synod PJC
Class of 2027 – Stewart Smith, Presbytery of Arkansas
Class of 2029 – Bill Blew, Indian Nations Presbytery; Grace Kim, Tres Rios Presbytery
Class of 2031 – Gerry Tyler, Grace Presbytery; Graciela Munoz, Mission Presbytery

Grants and Scholarships Commission
Linda Trueblood, Presbytery of South Louisiana

Moderator Fike asked for nominations from the floor. Commissioner Molly Casteel nominated Alison Burchett from Cimarron Presbytery for the Synod PJC. Kristy Singleton Carr from Presbytery of the Pines was nominated by Commissioner James Barker for the Synod PJC.

Presented with the above slate, the Assembly approved the Coordinating Team's motion, with one abstention.

Polly Williams nominated Todd Freeman to continue serving on the Grants and Scholarships Commission after rotating off as a Synod Commissioner. That motion was also approved *(Attachment J)*.

Empowering Committee – Commissioner Leah McFadden reported on the work of the committee, which includes the Synod Youth Workshop report, border ministries updates, and the HMMN 2026 goals. The committee's focus is to support networks as needed, particularly working toward establishing a border ministry network, and a recently formalized with the new covenant agreement in Northwest Mexico *(Attachment K)*.

One of the Synod's goals for 2026 is to create a campus ministries network, and initial brainstorming for this is underway. Plans for the 2026 Synod Youth Workshop are set for July 13–18 at the University of Tulsa, with the theme *"May God Be With You"* and keynote speaker Pastor Michael East from FPC Norman. The workshop aims to increase youth participation by 20%, supported by available scholarship funds. The committee emphasized promotional materials: flyers, videos, and resources are available for presbyteries to use *(Attachment L)*.

Leah invited Claire Varnon to speak about her experiences at Synod Youth Workshop. Claire, a licensed professional counselor, shared how Synod Youth Workshop transformed her life. As a socially awkward 15-year-old, a small group leader telling her she was "precious" helped her start breaking down emotional walls. She now serves as a small group leader, helping youth experience God's love, build confidence, and engage in service projects. Claire emphasized SYW's focus on community, inclusion, and leadership development and encouraged churches to support youth participation.

Leah invited Commissioner Lisa Almon to talk about the Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN). Lisa announced their new website (hmmnetwork.org) and shared updates on their goals and activities. They aim to expand workshops beyond the Mission Presbytery to other communities, including Houston, the Valley, and DFW. This coming Friday and Saturday, HMMN will host youth and parent workshops at Lucia Latina in Houston, with presenters including Carlos Baladez.

Their annual meeting is scheduled for April 24–25 at Austin Seminary, featuring keynote Rev. Dan Gonzalez Ortega, co-moderator of the National Hispanic Caucus. HMMN emphasized their commitment to leadership development, community engagement, and sharing their programs widely *(Attachment M)*.

Equipping Committee – Commissioner Molly Casteel shared their ongoing efforts to support the Synod by expanding equity, access, and training opportunities throughout its ministries. They welcomed three new members to the committee and invited others to join *(Attachment N)*.

A major focus of the report was gathering feedback from commissioners to help the committee understand the current capacity of the Synod, communication between presbyteries and the Synod, and awareness of available resources. Commissioners were encouraged to complete a short survey, available via QR code or on the Commissioner's page of the Synod website. The committee stressed that even incomplete responses are helpful, as the information will guide the development of survey instruments and grassroots data collection to prioritize training and resource allocation. Molly emphasized that this feedback is central to helping them make informed decisions for 2026 and 2027 priorities.

The committee highlighted their partnerships with EPs and Stated Clerks and their commitment to monthly meetings to coordinate and plan their work. They reiterated that their purpose, established last year, is to ensure that the Synod's assets are used to provide equitable access to opportunities and resources. Gathering input from commissioners is critical to determine the most useful ways to support local ministries and expand collaborative efforts across the Synod.

Presentation from Ghost Ranch - David Evans, CEO of Ghost Ranch, introduced the 21,000-acre retreat center with deep Presbyterian roots. Founded in the 1930s, it was donated to the Presbyterian Church in 1955 and became an independent nonprofit in 2017. Evans shared his personal connection, having attended Ghost Ranch as a child, and emphasized the importance of rebuilding strong church relationships.

Ghost Ranch offers faith-based programming, including working preacher retreats, art programs, family weeks, corral programs, and support for children while adults attend classes. The center has 100 guest rooms and is ideal for retreats, workshops, and meetings for congregations or groups.

Evans also highlighted land preservation efforts, including placing the property under conservation easements in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation, which leases the land at a nominal rate while ensuring alignment with the church's mission. Overall, Ghost Ranch is a place for spiritual renewal, community building, and family engagement.

Connecting Committee – Commissioner Polly Williams, chair of the Connections Committee, began by reflecting on the committee's recent work and the relational focus that defines their approach. Polly emphasized that the Connections Committee has been intentionally small and highly productive. She highlighted the contributions of Commissioners Princeton Abaraoha and Diana Smith, noting that their one-on-one collaborations were both "productive and sacred," and credited their relational leadership with making the committee's work effective.

A key focus of the committee has been examining what it means to be a covenant partner, particularly in light of historical relationships that have shaped the committee's work. Williams highlighted the importance of current relationships, which she described as "providential fertile ground" for ministry and an opportunity to bring out the committee's best self in an increasingly global witness.

The committee also manages financial gifts, which have made a tangible difference in communities like Ukraine, Haiti, and Solar Under the Sun. Williams expressed gratitude for their Treasurer's work in ensuring that funds were distributed effectively, and she highlighted a heartfelt letter from recipients acknowledging the generosity and impact of these gifts.

Finally, Polly noted areas for growth, including storytelling, technology, and communication, and expressed her eagerness to accept support from colleagues and partners to enhance the committee's presence in newsletters and other communications. Overall, the Connections Committee is positioned for intentional growth, deeper partnerships, and increased impact both locally and globally (Attachment O).

The Committee moved the renewal of the Synod's Covenant with the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest. The motion was approved. The Covenant Agreement Renewal was signed by Mitch Miller and Bill Wiles, who is the Secretary and Treasurer of the PHSSW.

Bill reported that the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Southwest operates as a joint agency of the Synod of the Sun and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. With the Cumberland seminary closing, the society continues its work preserving and sharing Presbyterian history. Their annual meeting will be held at Austin Theological Seminary on March 22–23, featuring presentations on local church history.

The society recently completed a project digitizing over 40 years of historical presentations in partnership with the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. Members gain access to over 200 digital histories, documenting Presbyterian work across the region. The society expressed gratitude for ongoing support and renewed covenant relationships.

Grants and Scholarships Commission – Polly Williams reported on the work of the Grants and Scholarship Commission, highlighting a major accomplishment: the committee and coordinating team facilitated the participation of 146 youth and young adults from 46 congregations in the first Youth Triennium in six years, held at the denomination's national headquarters. This gathering supported the Synod's priorities in leadership development and ministry for college-age and young adults. She emphasized that even disruptions, such as missing the opportunity to gather for three years, were ultimately used for good *(Attachment P)*.

2026 Spring Stated Meeting Minutes To Be Approved

Report from Presbyteiran Children's Homes and Services - Laura Fleming, Director of Development, shared updates from PCHAS, celebrating its 123rd year since being founded by First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. They have launched new vision, mission, and value statements:

- Vision: Every child is safe, every family is strong, and hope outshines hardship.
- Mission: Guided by Christ's love, PCHAS empowers children, young adults, and families by nurturing strengths, resilience, and faith.
- Values: Serve like Jesus, ask what families want to be different, treat people with respect and compassion, and focus on strengths and futures.

PCHAS operates in 39 locations across three states and recently launched Family Resource Centers in Massachusetts and Hillsboro, Texas. These centers provide food and diaper banks, counseling, computer access, sensory rooms, and family support services for children 0–5 and their families. The program received a $2 million grant from the state of Texas and employs roughly 15 staff per center. Fleming emphasized that PCHAS's track record led the state to trust them with this initiative, and she hopes to expand resource centers to more cities.

Following an advertisement for the upcoming retreat for Commissioned Pastors and Small Church Leaders called *Flourishing in the Spirit*, by Sharon Curry, Moderator Fike ended our Assembly with prayer and singing.

Attachment D

SYNOD OF THE SUN

Financial Report Packet
For the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

What is included in this financial packet:

Statement of Financial Position.....1

Investment Funds Review.....3

Statement of Activities.....5

Expense Item Details.....7

Use of Cash Reserve Funds.....9

Presbytery Giving.....11

Notes to Financial Statements.....12

Prepared by: William M. (Bill) Wiles
Treasurer, Synod of the Sun

October 14, 2026

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

Statement of Financial Position

September 30, 2026

ASSETS			Balances at
Unrestricted Assets			9.30.26
Account	Cash Balances:		
10200	Pegasus Operating Account		45,546
10210	Pegasus Payroll Account		5,008
10100	Chase Operating Account		1,025
10300	NCTC Money Market	Note 2	84,971
10400	NCTC Certificates of Deposit	Note 2	421,673
10900	Undeposited Funds	Note 3	2,028
12111	PILP Certificate of Deposit	Note 4	100,000
	Total Cash Assets		660,251
12214	Gatewood Funds (TPF)		775,903
12229	Ministry Reserve Funds		71,892
12231	Year End Reserves		67,788
	Synod Budget Accrual Fund		13,000
15000	Equipment		8,384
15100	Accumulated depreciation		(5,221)
16101	Accounts receivable, net	Note 5	6,342
	Total		1,698,339
Synod Designated Assets			
12233	Disaster Assistance		18,876
12112	Regional PDA		122,709
12218	MACC Trust		87,428
12220	MAPPA Scholarship		49,814
	Total		278,827
Donor Restricted Assets			
12225	Crisp Scholarship		143,589
12223	Crisp Endowment		120,303
12235	Munson & Kerr Scholarship		1,748,688
	Total		2,012,580
	Total Assets		3,989,746

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

Statement of Financial Position

September 30, 2026

LIABILITIES		
20000	Accounts Payable	820
	Payroll Liabilities	1,387
20510	Due to SYW	(12,429)
20520	Due to SPDR	(13,210)
22200	Commerce Bank Credit Card	7,727
	Total Liabilities	(15,705)
FUND EQUITY		
	Unrestricted Equity	1,171,834
	Synod Designated Equity	420,887
	Donor Restricted Equity	2,412,730
	Total Fund Equity	4,005,451
	Total Liabilities & Fund Equity	3,989,746

7.14.26

2026 Review of Synod of the Sun Investment Funds

For the Year Ended December 31, 2026

Unrestricted Funds

Fund Description		Beginning $	Portfolio Gains	Income	Withdrawals	New Funds	Ending $	Annual return	Net Change
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12214 Gatewood Account									
51392									
Cole Monroe									
TPF Balanced Pooled Fund	Q1	724,803.48	(15,695.20)	6,101.27			715,209.55	-1.3%	
	Q2	715,209.55	56,776.97	6,138.50	(5,000.00)		773,125.02	8.8%	
	Q3	773,125.02	(3,382.94)	6,160.87			775,902.95	0.4%	
	Q4						0.00	#DIV/0!	
TOTALS FOR 2026		724,803.48	37,698.83	18,400.64	(5,000.00)	0.00	775,902.95	7.7%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12229 Ministry Reserves									
54201									
Cole Monroe									
TPF Balanced Pooled Fund	Q1	67,644.73	(1,464.81)	569.42			66,749.34	-1.3%	
	Q2	66,749.34	5,299.19	572.82	(500.00)		72,121.35	8.8%	
	Q3	72,121.35	(302.77)	573.43	(500.00)		71,892.01	0.4%	
	Q4						0.00	#REF!	
TOTALS FOR 2026		67,644.73	3,531.61	1,715.67	(1,000.00)	0.00	71,892.01	7.8%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12231 Year-End Reserves									
54495									
Cole Monroe									
TPF Balanced Pooled Fund	Q1	62,919.54	(1,362.49)	529.65			62,086.70	-1.3%	
	Q2	62,086.70	4,925.07	534.02			67,545.79	8.8%	
	Q3	67,545.79	(295.56)	538.26			67,788.49	0.4%	
	Q4						0.00	#DIV/0!	
TOTALS FOR 2026		62,919.54	3,267.02	1,601.93	0.00	0.00	67,788.49	7.7%	
Unrestricted Funds Totals		**855,367.75**	**44,497.46**	**21,718.24**	**(6,000.00)**	**0.00**	**915,583.45**		60,215.70

Synod Designated Funds

Fund Description		Beginning $	Portfolio Gains	Income	Withdrawals	New Funds	Ending $	Annual return	Net Change
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12233 Disaster Assistance Fund									
54825									
Cole Monroe									
TPF Balanced Pooled Fund	Q1	16,594.18	(359.34)	139.69			16,374.53	-1.3%	
	Q2	16,374.53	1,290.43	143.47	(4,000.00)	5,000.00	18,808.43	8.8%	
	Q3	18,808.43	(82.30)	149.88			18,876.01	0.4%	
	Q4						0.00		
TOTALS FOR 2026		16,594.18	848.79	433.04	(4,000.00)	5,000.00	18,876.01	7.7%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12112 Synod Regional PDA									
55716									
Cole Monroe									
TPF Balanced Pooled Fund	Q1	128,619.79	(2,676.91)	1,040.61	(5,000.00)		121,983.49	-1.3%	
	Q2	121,983.49	9,279.80	1,006.19	(5,000.00)		127,269.48	8.4%	
	Q3	127,269.48	(535.01)	974.35	(5,000.00)		122,708.82	0.3%	
	Q4						0.00	#DIV/0!	
TOTALS FOR 2026		128,619.79	6,067.88	3,021.15	(15,000.00)	0.00	122,708.82	7.1%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation									
12218 **Hispanic American Ministries**									
50900									
MAAC									
Large Cap Equity	Q1	79,913.59	(5,594.68)	146.13			74,465.04	-6.8%	
	Q2	74,465.04	9,883.65	207.42			84,556.11	13.6%	
	Q3	84,556.11	2,683.25	188.29			87,427.65	3.4%	
	Q4						0.00		
TOTALS FOR 2026		79,913.59	6,972.22	541.84	0.00	0.00	87,427.65	9.4%	

	Fund Description		Beginning $	Portfolio Gains	Income	Withdrawals	New Funds	Ending $	Annual return	Net Change
Texas Presbyterian Foundation										
12220 **Hispanic American Ministries**	*Large Cap Equity*	Q1	47,051.83	(2,428.90)	148.99			44,771.92	-11.6%	
50901	*Fixed Income*	Q2	44,771.92	4,153.53	196.75			49,122.20	9.7%	
Cole Monroe		Q3	49,122.20	495.33	196.71			49,814.24	1.4%	
MAPPA		Q4						0.00		
	TOTALS FOR 2026		47,051.83	2,219.96	542.45	0.00	0.00	49,814.24	5.9%	
	Synod Designated Funds Totals		**272,179.39**	**16,108.85**	**4,538.48**	**(19,000.00)**	**5,000.00**	**278,826.72**	7.6%	6,647.33
								6,647.33		
Donor Restricted Funds								278,826.72		
Texas Presbyterian Foundation										
12225 **Albert S Crisp Scholarship Fund**	*TPF Balanced Pooled Fund*	Q1	138,315.83	(2,058.06)	1,161.23			137,419.00	#REF!	
#51736		Q2	137,419.00	7,474.43	1,190.36			146,083.79	6.3%	
Specified Beneficiaries		Q3	146,083.79	(435.91)	1,191.59	(3,250.00)		143,589.47	0.5%	
Scholarship Uses		Q4						0.00		
Cole Monroe	**TOTALS FOR 2025**		138,315.83	4,980.46	3,543.18	(3,250.00)	0.00	143,589.47	6.2%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation										
12223 **Albert S Crisp Scholarship Children's**	*TPF Balanced Pooled Fund*	Q1	114,705.63	(2,242.43)	964.79			113,427.99	-1.1%	
#51737		Q2	113,427.99	8,143.99	977.88			122,549.86	7.6%	
Specified Beneficiaries		Q3	122,549.86	(474.96)	978.15	(2,750.00)		120,303.05	0.4%	
Unrestricted Uses		Q4						0.00	#DIV/0!	
Cole Monroe	**TOTALS FOR 2025**		114,705.63	5,426.60	2,920.82	(2,750.00)	0.00	120,303.05	7.3%	
Texas Presbyterian Foundation										
12235 **Betsy Kerr Munson & John Steele**	*TPF Balanced Pooled Fund*	Q1	1,625,354.17	(35,196.10)	13,681.95			1,603,840.02	-1.3%	
55474		Q2	1,603,840.02	127,225.72	13,794.91			1,744,860.65	#REF!	
Kerr Scholarship		Q3	1,744,860.65	(7,570.89)	13,897.95	(2,500.00)		1,748,687.71	0.4%	
Cole Monroe		Q4						0.00	#DIV/0!	
	TOTALS FOR 2025		1,625,354.17	84,458.73	41,374.81	(2,500.00)	0.00	1,748,687.71	7.7%	
	Donor Restricted Funds Totals		**1,878,375.63**	**94,865.79**	**47,838.81**	**(8,500.00)**	**0.00**	**2,012,580.23**	7.6%	134,204.60
	TOTAL SOS FUNDS		**3,005,922.77**	**155,472.10**	**74,095.53**	**(33,500.00)**	**5,000.00**	**3,206,990.40**	7.6%	201,067.63

New Investment Funds	5,000.00
Withdrawals	(33,500.00)
Change in investment values	229,567.63
Net Change	201,067.63

Statement of Activities

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.
For the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES			Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Restrictions	2026 Totals	2026 Budget
Unrestricted Revenues						
41000	Presbytery Contributions		84,079		84,079	85,000
42100	Contributions		250		250	0
42110	Synod Foundation	Note 6	255,262		255,262	346,000
42150	Special Contributions		0		0	0
42210	Interest Income--PILP		1,820		1,820	3,500
42250	Interest Income--NCTC		14,225		14,225	25,000
42240	Interest Income--Other		162		167	
43100	Communication Services		66,737		66,737	70,000
4400	Other Income		31		31	
49100	Pass-Through Funds		35		35	0
			422,601	0	422,606	529,500
Unrestricted Expenses (See Detailed Expense Schedule)						
61000	Connecting Expenditures		77		77	9,500
62001	Equipping		23,926		23,926	28,400
63000	Empowering		12,695		12,695	30,500
64001	Coordinating Team		96,385		96,385	121,250
65000	Personnel		300,054		300,054	384,299
66001	Grants and Scholarships (#61040)		26,050		26,050	25,000
66002	Representation		0		0	2,000
66003	Permanent Judicial Commission		0		0	1,000
90200	Depreciation		0		0	0
90300	Credit card suspense		1,428		1,428	
	Total Expenses		460,615	0	460,615	601,949
OPERATIONAL FUNDS INCOME			(38,014)	0	(38,009)	(72,449)

Statement of Activities

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

For the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Restrictions	2026 Totals
USE OF RESERVE FUNDS (see details on page XX)			
Unrestricted Funds			
Year-To-Date Income	0		
Year-To-Date Disbursements	(22,750)		(22,750)
Synod Designated Funds			
Year-To-Date Income		15,000	
Year-To-Date Disbursements		(9,737)	5,263
Donor Restricted Funds			
Year-To-Date Income		64,604	
Year-To-Date Disbursements		(47,075)	17,529
Net Reserve Funds Income			42

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Restrictions	2026 Totals
INVESTMENT FUND FLOWS			
Unrestricted TPF Funds			
YTD Income/Change in Values	66,216		
YTD Withdrawals:			
Disaster Assist. Trans.	(5,000)		
EOP Disaster Assist.	(1,000)		
Net Change	60,216		60,216
Synod Designated TPF Funds			
YTD Income/Change in Values		20,647	
Add from Gatewood Fund		5,000	
YTD Withdrawals:			
SPDR Support		(15,000)	
EOP Disaster Assist.		(4,000)	
Net Change		6,647	6,647
Donor Restricted TPF Funds			
YTD Income/Change in Values		142,705	
YTD Withdrawals:			
Crisp Funds Distributed		(6,000)	
Munson/Steel Scholar.		(2,500)	
Net Change		134,205	134,205
Total Investment Incomes			201,068
TOTAL EXCESS OF INCOME OVER DISBURSEMENTS			163,101

Statement of Activities
Expense Item Details
Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.
For the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

Administration & Operations		9.30.26		2026	
Connecting Expenditures		**Actual**		**Budget**	
61080	Presbyterian Women	0		0	
61100	Covenant Relationship Travel	0		0	
61110	Lyon College	0		0	
61120	Austin College	0		0	
61130	University of Ozarks	0		0	
61140	Schreiner University	0		0	
61150	Trinity University	0		0	
61160	Tulsa University	0		0	
61170	PanAmerican School	0		0	
61180	Austin Seminary	0		0	
61190	Presby Children's Home & Service	0		0	
61200	Evergreen Presby. Ministries	0		0	
61210	Vera Loyd Home & Family	0		0	
61220	Goodland Academy	0		0	
61230	Mo Ranch	0		0	
61240	Presby. Historical Society of SW	0		0	
61250	Texas Presbyterian Foundation	0		0	
61260	Multi-Cultural Youth Conf.	0		3,500	
61302	Connecting Initiatives	0		0	
61310	Critical Needs Fund	0		500	
61330	National Event Hospitality	77		5,500	
	Totals	77		9,500	
Equipping Expenditures					
61030	COM Event	0		0	
61035	Development Courses	0		0	
61060	Sexual Misconduct Resources	3,799		3,000	
61070	EP Forum	1,541	}	10,000	
61270	Synod School	10,000	}	22,500	note
	Use Carryover 2025 funds			(10,000)	
61280	Clerk Forum	76	}	0	
61285	Triennum	3,000			note
62030	CSP Operations (PassThru)	3,651		0	
62060	Synod/CSP Marketing	1,859		2,400	
64160	Racial Ethnic Ministries	0		500	
	Totals	23,926		28,400	
Empowering Expenditures					
61050	Network Nurture	5,013		5,000	
61100	Hispanic Mission Ministries Network	0		5,000	
61065	Raising Tomorrow's Leaders	0		10,000	
	(additional funding from reserve funds)				
63100	Synod Partnership for Disaster Support	0		3,000	
61270	Synod Youth Workshop + AV Equipment	7,682		7,500	
	Totals	12,695		30,500	
Grants & Scholarships					
	FPC Abilene: MASSA	5,000			
	Dubuque: Tobias Green	2,050			
	Camp Gilmont	4,000			
	Palo Duro: NOROC	5,000			
	FPC Garland	5,000			
	Friends of Gujranwala Seminary	5,000			
	Totals	26,050		25,000	note

Statement of Activities
Expense Item Details
Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.
For the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

		9.30.26 Actual	2026 Budget	
Coordinating Team				
61340	Moderator Expenses	0	1,000	
62040	Computer Hardware + subscriptions	305	500	
62050	Online Operations	4,689	5,000	
62055	Online Processing Fees (VANCO)	413	250	
62057	Synod Leader Discretionary Fund	0	20,000	
64010	Stated Meeting, Fall	5,515	22,000	
64020	Stated Meeting, Spring	20,036	15,000	
64030	Leadership Gathering	6,445	5,000	
64035	CP Conference	(2,042)		
64040	General Assembly	8,535	4,000	
64050	Administrative Commission	0	1,000	
64100	Other Committee Expenses	0	500	
66000	Office Expenses	82	0	
66010	Office Rent	0	0	
66020	Telephone	0	0	
66030	Postage	0	500	
66040	Copiers	0	0	
66050	Supplies	1,231	1,000	
66060	File Retention/Storage	894	1,000	
66070	Bookkeeping Services	35,667	22,000	
66071	Audit Fees	4,500	12,000	
66090	Insurance	6,352	7,000	
66100	Bank Charges	1,251	1,000	
66105	APLOS Fees	2,386	2,000	
65420	New Leader Search	0	0	
66110	Miscellaneous Charges	126	500	
66120	Contingency	0	0	
	Totals	96,385	121,250	
Personnel Expenditures				
65010	Synod Leader/SC Salary & House	83,383	111,178	
65020	Synod Leader/SC BOP	39,662	46,200	
65030	Synod Leader/SC FICA Share	6,379	7,200	
65040	Synod Leader/SC Prof Expenses	679	1,500	
65050	Synod Leader/SC Prof Development	0	2,500	
65510	Synod Leader/SC Travel	20,790	32,000	
	Totals	150,893	200,578	
65110	Comm & Admin Coordinator Salary	48,564	64,885	
65120	Comm & Admin Coordinator BOP	17,025	20,100	
65125	Comm & Admin Coordinator FSA	1,192	0	
65130	Comm & Admin Coord. Payroll Taxes	3,450	4,500	
65140	Comm & Admin Coordinator Prof Dev.	497	1,500	note
65142	Comm & Admin Corrdinator Sabbatical	3,369	0	
65520	Comm & Admin Coordinator Travel	833	2,500	
	Totals	74,930	93,485	
65170	Treasurer Salary	29,299	39,064	
65180	Treasurer Payroll Taxes	2,241	3,000	
65190	Treasurer Prof Expenses	375	2,000	
65195	Treasurer Travel	2,347	2,000	
	Totals	34,262	46,064	
65150	Administrative Assistant Salary	18,505	24,672	
65160	Administrative Assistant Payroll Taxes	1,415	3,500	
		19,920	28,172	
65220	Temp Staff & Other Staff Expense	18,980	15,000	note
65410	HR Committee	1,069	1,000	
	Totals	300,054	384,299	

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

USE OF CASH RESERVE FUNDS

Transactions for the Six Months Ended June 30, 2026

	Unrestricted Reserves	Balance 12.31.25		YTD Income @9.30.26		YTD Distributions @9.30.26	Balance @9.30.26
31100	Gatewood Fund	145,636	#				122,886
	SPDR Matching Funds Challenge					(11,000)	
	Kaleidoscope sponsorship					(750)	
	Pan American School					(3,000)	
	Tres Rios Foundation					(8,000)	
33100	Ministry Reserve	7,142	#				7,142
33110	Year-End Reserves	6,643	#				6,643
33120	Disaster Assistance Fund	357	#				357
	Totals	159,778		0		(22,750)	137,028
	Synod Designated Reserves						
31140	Translation Fund	29,726					29,726
	Solar Under the Sun	300					300
31160	Racial Ethnic Ministries	0		7,500	CT		2,500
	Korean Pastor Conference					(5,000)	
31180	Special Meetings	17,655					17,655
31190	Synod Leadership Travel	3,212					3,212
31220	COR Network	471					471
31222	Commissioned Pastor Network	15,121					10,384
	CP Pre-conference costs					(4,737)	
31250	Promotional Swag	1,957					1,957
31260	Network Reserves	30,121					30,121
31270	Cross Cultural Intern	0		7,500	CT		7,500
31280	Presby. Leader Formation	12,734					12,734
31310	Mission Network Grants	0					0
31300	International Mission Trips	0					0
32130	Opioid Crisis	500					500
32140	Network for Dismantling. Racism	0					0
32155	ESL Scholarship Fund	25,000					25,000
	Totals	136,797		15,000		(9,737)	142,060

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

USE OF CASH RESERVE FUNDS

Transactions for the Nine Months Ended September 30, 2026

	Donor Restricted Funds	Balance 12.31.25	YTD Income @9.30.26		YTD Distributions @9.30.26		Balance @9.30.26
33130	David Robinson Fund	2,646	687	PF			3,333
33140	Seminary Scholarship Fund	8,424	485	TPF			7,274
	Kate McGee				(1,635)		
33150	Young Adult Volunteers	55,499	3,802	TPF			59,301
33160	Educational Programs	768	380	TPF			1,148
33170	Peacemaking	1,923	327				1,250
	Camp Gilmont counselor				(1,000)		
33187	Aid for Pastors	14,976	2,558	TPF			13,934
	Rachael McConnell				(1,100)		
	Indian Nations: Pastor Retreat				(2,500)		
33188	Church Extension and Development	15,313	5,733	TPF			21,046
33190	National Missions in Texas	37,543	5,722	TPF			30,765
	New Covenant Presbytery				(3,500)		
	First Presbyterian Garland				(4,000)		
	FPC Kerrville				(5,000)		
33200	Old Age Concerns	152,020	17,066	TPF			159,086
	Presbyterian Village				(5,000)	**B**	
	Presbyterian Village				(5,000)	**B**	
33210	Reserve for Higher Education	79,266	13,940	TPF			88,206
	Pan American School Chaplain				(5,000)	**A**	
33220	Child & Youth Schroeder	363	371	PF			2,910
	Child & Youth Schroeder	730	1,446	TPF			
22900	SOSPF Scholarship Fund	13,150	12,087	TPF			11,897
	ATS: Yoan				(2,500)		
	Dubuque: Benny Thompson				(4,000)		
	Benny Thompson returned $$				1,160		
	Arkansas Presbytery: Rob Button				(2,500)		
	Dubuque: Taylor Kronberg				(5,500)		
	Totals	382,621	64,604		(47,075)		400,150
	Grand Totals	679,196	79,604		(79,562)		679,238

\# These are funds in addition to similarly named TPF investment accounts.

A The Synod has committed $5,000 annual support to the chaplaincy program through 2028.

B Funds disbursed in October, 2026

Presbytery Giving Schedule
10.13.26

		----------SPDR Support----------						-----SOTS Mission Funds----			
			-----Amounts as of 9.30.26-----								
Presbytery	2025 Members	2025 Giving	2026 Giving	2026 Synod $	2026 Totals	2027 Giving	2024 Giving	2025 Giving	9.30.26 Giving	2027 Giving	Per Member Thru 9.30
Arkansas	6,763	7,500	8,500	1,000	9,500	??	21,000	7,171	13,279	??	1.96
Cimarron	859	0	3,500	1,500	5,000	??	6,091	5,461	2,459	??	2.86
Grace	20,058	5,000	5,000		5,000	??	15,536	9,167	4,770	??	0.24
Eastern Oklahoma	4,339	5,000	7,500	2,500	10,000	??	6,667	6,132	8,333	??	1.92
Indian Nations	3,995	5,000	5,000		5,000	??	7,914	7,714	4,327	??	1.08
Mission	15,535	5,000	5,000		5,000	??	10,098	22,319	17,141	??	1.10
New Covenant	12,733	5,000	10,000	5,000	15,000	??	10,000	5,000	10,000	??	0.79
Palo Duro	3,330	5,000	5,000		5,000	??	16,021	8,118	9,839	??	2.95
Pines	2,298	5,000	5,000		5,000	??	0	0	10,066	??	4.38
South Louisiana	3,204	5,000	6,000	1,000	7,000	??	0	0	0	??	0.00
Tres Rios	1,787	2,500	3,500	1,000	4,500	??	5,000	2,740	3,865	??	2.16
Synod		20,000	15,000		15,000	20,000		NA	NA		
PDA		70,000	50,000		50,000	50,000		NA	NA		
TOTALS	74,901	140,000	129,000	12,000	141,000	70,000	98,327	73,822	84,079	0	1.12

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

Notes to Financial Statements

September 30, 2026

Note 1 The Synod of the Sun ("Synod") utilizes the modified cash basis of accounting. This means that balance sheet items are normally recorded on the accrual basis and income statement items are recorded on the cash basis. This approach gives a clearer picture of the actual cash position of the Synod's incomes and expenses.

Note 2 The Synod has both a money market and a series of certificates of deposit placed with the Presbyterian Foundation's investment branch known as the New Covenant Trust Company. The Synod has the following certificates of deposit with NCTC:

$50,000 maturing on 3.04.27 at 3.95%
$175,000 maturing on 5.28.27 at 4.15%
$100,000 maturing on 5.01.28 at 4.05%
$100,000 maturing on 5.29.29 at 4.10%

Interest earnings from these certificates of deposit are transferred to the money market account.

Note 3 The Synod's CSP program uses the VANCO payment receiving service of the Presbyterian Foundation. The Foundation notifies us when they have received funds, but there is a lag time in our receiving funds from the Foundation. This account represents that lag time.

Note 4 The Synod has a $100,000 certificate of deposit placed with the Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program. Although the interest rate on this CD is below market rates, the CD provides a form of compenating balance allowing some of the churches within our boundaries to have lower borrowing costs.

Note 5 The accounts receivable balance is composed of CSP program billings and an allowance for doubtful accounts.

Note 6 The Synod receives the bulk of its annual operating budget from the Synod of the Sun Foundation. Generally the amount of these funds represent a 5% annual distribution rate. The Foundation has an authorized board of 11 members representing all of the presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod plus other specific representatives. The board meets annually.

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budget Notes

An Overview of the Synod's Accounting Structure

The first step in diving into the 2027 budget of the Synod of the Sun ("Synod') is to understand that the accounting and reporting standards for churches and other non-profit organizations are different from those used in the for-profit business world. Those differences are driven by the fact that most non-profits depend upon distributions from their investment funds in order to sustain their operations.

The guidelines of the American Institute of Certified Professional Accountants require the assets and incomes of non-profit organizations (like the Synod and its presbyteries and churches) be segregated into two classifications:

- **Unrestricted Assets or Funds:**

  Unrestricted Funds are the assets and incomes which have no restrictions on their use. The 2027 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's unrestricted assets are shown in the green highlighted area on page 3. Account details are shown on pages 4 and 5.

- **Restricted Assets or Funds:**

  Restricted Funds are financial assets which have restrictions on when and/or how they can be utilized by the Synod. There are two types of restricted assets:

  Funds the Synod has set-aside for designated uses:
  These are financial funds which the Synod has designated for specific uses. These Synod Designated Funds can be redesignated for different uses from time-to-time by the Synod or they can be reclassified as Unrestricted Funds. The 2027 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's Designated Funds are shown in the orange highlighted area on page 3. Account details are shown on pages 6 and 7.

  - Funds restricted by the donor of the funds:
    These are financial funds held by the Synod which were received from donors who attached restrictions t0 these funds. Those restrictions can be for the use of the fund, the income it generates, or time restrictions on when the funds can be used. Generally, such restrictions can be modified only by the donor or, under certain circumstances, actions taken by a court-of-law. Grants are generally considered to be donor-restricted funds.

    Additionally, the periodic distribution of funds which the Synod receives from endowment funds are also considered donor-restricted funds which must be used for the purposes set forth by the donor.

  The 2027 projected incomes and expenses of the Synod's Donor Restricted Funds are also shown in the orange highlighted area on page 3. Account details

are shown on pages 6 and 7. Disbursements of these funds are usually handled by the Synod's Grants and Scholarships Commission.

The AICPA also sets forth guidelines that require the receipts and disbursements associated with each of these three funds be tracked separately. This requirement for "fund accounting" is the second major difference from the accounting practices followed by business organizations. This is why the budget summary on page 6 is composed of three separate sections (Unrestricted, Synod Designated, and Donor Restricted).

Specific Changes Included in the 2027 Projected Budget

The changes proposed in the 2027 Synod budget vs. the 2026 Synod budget are highlighted in blue. This detailed information is being provided to you now so we can stream-line the budget presentation process while being fully transparent in our presentations. If you have questions, please bring them to our Fall Assembly or contact me directly. Below is a summary of the proposed changes.

Friends, budget amounts are just numbers, and they can quickly become mind-numbing and soul-killing. What is most important is what we are doing with our funds. How our budget funds help support and inform our mission and ministry together.

Your Coordinating Team has given a tremendous amount of thought and effort to making sure this budget not only strengthens what we are already doing, but also lays foundations for new work as the Synod seeks to serve our presbyteries and their congregations.

Yes, we can make a real difference

when we pool our funds and work together!

Bill Wiles

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bwiles@chooseGod.org

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budgets

		9.30.2026				Proposed 2027 Budget		
		UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals	2026 Budget	UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals
UnRestricted Incomes								
41000	Presbytery Contributions	84,079		84,079	85,000	85,000		85,000
42100	Contributions	250		250				
42110	Synod Foundation Funds	255,262		255,262	346,000	380,000		380,000
42110	Administration Support (SOSFD)	0		0				0
42100	Contributions	0		0	0			0
42150	Special Contributions	0		0	0	0		0
42210	PILP Interest Earned	1,820		1,820	3,500	3,500		3,500
42550	NCTC Income (accrued)	14,225		14,225	25,000	20,000		20,000
42440	Other Income	162		162	0			
43100	Communication Services	66,737		66,737	70,000	75,000		75,000
44000	Other Income	31		31	0	0		0
49100	Pass-Thru funds	35		35	0	0		0
	Total Revenues	422,601	0	422,601	529,500	563,500	0	563,500
UnRestricted Expenses (See Detailed Expenses)								
61000	Connecting Expenditures	77		77	9,500	15,300		15,300
62001	Equipping	23,926		23,926	28,400	12,000		12,000
63000	Empowering	12,695		12,695	30,500	35,900		35,900
64001	Coordinating Team	96,385		96,385	121,250	111,350		111,350
65000	Personnel	300,054		300,054	384,299	394,799		394,799
66001	Grants and Scholarships (#61040)	26,050		26,050	25,000	25,000		25,000
66002	Representation	0		0	2,000	7,000		7,000
	See TPF funds schedule for new tool to assess							
	Synod participation by minority groups							
66003	Permanent Judicial Commission	0		0	1,000	500		500
	Total Expenses	459,187	0	459,187	601,949	601,849	0	601,849
	OPERATIONAL FUNDS INCOMES	(36,586)	0	(36,586)	(72,449)	(38,349)	0	(38,349)
Transactions in Restricted/Unrestricted Reserve Funds								
Unrestricted Reserve Funds								
	Projected Unrestricted Funds Income					0		0
	Projected Use of Unrestricted Funds					(24,000)		(24,000)
Synod-Designated Reserve Funds:								
	Projected Synod-Designated Funds Income						0	0
	Projected Use of Synod-Designated Funds						(3,000)	(3,000)
Donor Restricted Reserve Funds:								
	Projected Donor-Restricted Funds Income						91,049	91,049
	Projected Use of Donor-Restricted Funds						(10,000)	(10,000)
	Net Change in Value of Reserve Funds					(24,000)	78,049	54,049
Projected Changes in TPF Investment Funds								
	Projected Increases in Value					76,700	186,200	262,900
	Projected Uses of Investment Funds					(18,000)	(42,000)	(60,000)
	New Additions to Investment Funds					0	0	0
	Net Change in Value of Investments					58,700	144,200	202,900
	Net Income Including Reserves & Investments					(3,649)	222,249	218,600

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budgets
Detailed Expenses

		9.30.2026				Proposed 2027 Budget			
		UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals	2026 Budget	UnRestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Totals	
Connecting Expenditures									
61080	Presbyterian Women	0		0	0	0		0	
61100	Covenant Relationship Travel	0		0	0	0		0	
61110	Lyon College	0		0	0	0		0	
61120	Austin College	0		0	0	0		0	
61130	University of Ozarks	0		0	0	0		0	
61140	Schreiner University	0		0	0	0		0	
61150	Trinity University	0		0	0	0		0	
61160	Tulsa University	0		0	0	0		0	
61170	PanAmerican School	0		0	0	0		0	
61180	Austin Seminary	0		0	0	0		0	
61190	Presby Children's Home & Service	0		0	0	0		0	
61200	Evergreen Presby. Ministries	0		0	0	0		0	
61210	Vera Loyd Home & Family	0		0	0	0		0	
61220	Goodland Academy	0		0	0	0		0	
61230	Mo Ranch	0		0	0	0		0	
61240	Presby. Historical Society of SW	0		0	0	0		0	
61250	Texas Presbyterian Foundation	0		0	0	0		0	
61260	*Multi-Cultural Youth Conf.*	0		0	3,500	0		0	
61302	Connecting Initiatives	0		0	0	0		0	
61310	Critical Needs Fund	0		0	500	0		0	
61330	National Event Hospitality	77		77	5,500	0		0	
	Support Austin College Grant Writing Intern					11,300		11,300	
	UnAllocated Allowances					4,000		4,000	discuss
	Totals	77	0	77	9,500	15,300	0	15,300	
Equipping Expenditures									
61030	COM Event	0		0	0	500		500	
61035	Leadership Development	0		0	0	0		0	
61270	Synod School	}		0	22,500	20,000			
	Carryover from 2026	}		0	(10,000)	(10,000)		10,000	
64160	Racial Equity Initiatives	0		0	500	1,500		1,500	
	Totals	0	0	0	13,000	12,000	0	12,000	
Empowering Expenditures									
61050	Network Nurture	5,013		5,013	5,000	5,000		5,000	
61100	Hispanic Mission Ministries Network	0		0	5,000	5,000		5,000	
61065	Raising Tomorrow's Leaders Today	0		0	10,000	10,000		10,000	
	(additional funding from reserves)							0	
61285	Youth Triennium (accrual)	3,000		3,000		3,000		3,000	
62060	Synod/CSP Marketing	1,859		1,859		2,400		2,400	
63100	SPDR Extra Support	0		0	3,000	3,000		3,000	discuss
61270	Synod Youth Workshop	7,682		7,682	7,500	7,500		7,500	
	This committee also has funds for N4DR in the Synod Reserves budget								
	Totals	17,554	0	17,554	30,500	35,900	0	35,900	

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budgets
Detailed Expenses

		9.30.2026			Proposed 2027 Budget			
Coordinating Team		**UnRestricted Funds**	**Restricted Funds**	**Totals**	**2026 Budget**	**UnRestricted Funds**	**Restricted Funds**	**Totals**
61060	Sexual Misconduct Training	3,799		3,799	3,000	5,000		5,000
61070	EP Forum	1,541 }		1,541	10,000	5,000		5,000
61280	Clerk Forum	76 }		76	0	0		0
61340	Moderator Expenses	0		0	1,000	1,000		1,000
62030	CSP Operations (Pass-thru)	3,651		3,651				
62040	Computer Hardware	305		305	500	500		500
62050	Online Operations	4,689		4,689	5,000	5,000		5,000
62055	Online Processing Fees	413		413	250	250		250
62057	Synod Leader Discretionary Fund	0		0	20,000	5,000		5,000
62060	Synod Marketing Materials	0		0	2,400	1,000		1,000
64010	Stated Meeting, Fall	5,515		5,515	22,000	20,000		20,000
64020	Stated Meeting, Spring	20,036		20,036	15,000	15,000		15,000
64030	Leadership Gathering	6,445		6,445	5,000	5,000		5,000
64035	CP Conference	(2,042)		(2,042)				
64040	General Assembly (Accrual)	8,535		8,535	4,000	4,000		4,000
64050	Administrative Commission	0		0	1,000	500		500
64100	Other Committee Expenses	0		0	500	500		500
66000	Office Expenses	82		82	0	0		0
66010	Office Rent	0		0	0	0		0
66020	Telephone	0		0	0	0		0
66030	Postage	0		0	500	100		100
66040	Copiers	0		0	0	0		0
66050	Supplies	1,231		1,231	1,000	1,000		1,000
66060	File Retention/Storage	894		894	1,000	400		400
66070	Bookkeeping Services	35,667		35,667	22,000	21,000		21,000
66071	Audit Fees	4,500		4,500	12,000	8,000		8,000
66090	Insurance	6,352		6,352	7,000	9,000		9,000
66100	Bank Charges	1,251		1,251	1,000	1,200		1,200
66105	APLOS Fees	2,386		2,386	2,000	2,400		2,400
66110	Miscellaneous Charges	126		126	500	500		500
66120	Contingency	0		0	0			0
	Totals	105,452	0	105,452	136,650	111,350	0	111,350
Personnel Expenditures								
65010	Synod Leader/SC Salary & House	83,383		83,383	111,178	111,178		111,178
65020	Synod Leader/SC BOP	39,662		39,662	46,200	46,200		46,200
65030	Synod Leader/SECA Offset	6,379		6,379	7,200	7,200		7,200
65040	Synod Leader/SC Prof Expenses	679		679	1,500	1,500		1,500
65050	Synod Leader/SC Prof Development	0		0	2,500	2,500		2,500
65510	Synod Leader/SC Travel	20,790		20,790	32,000	32,000		32,000
	Synod Leader Totals	150,893	0	150,893	200,578	200,578	0	200,578
65110	Comm & Admin Coordinator Salary	48,564		48,564	64,885	64,885		64,885
65120	Comm & Admin Coordinator BOP	17,025		17,025	20,100	20,100		20,100
65125	Comm &Admin Coordinator FSA	1,192		1,192				
65130	Comm & Admin Coord. Payroll Taxes	3,450		3,450	4,500	4,500		4,500
65140	Comm & Admin Coordinator Prof Dev.	497		497	1,500	1,500		1,500
65142	Comm & Admin Coordinator Sabbatical	3,369		3,369	0			0
65520	Comm & Admin Coordinator Travel	833		833	2,500	1,000		1,000
	Comm & Admin Totals	74,930	0	74,930	93,485	91,985	0	91,985
65170	Treasurer Salary	29,299		29,299	39,064	39,064		39,064
65180	Treasurer Payroll Taxes	2,241		2,241	3,000	3,000		3,000
	Treasurer Prof Expenses	375		375	2,000	2,000		2,000
	Treasurer Travel	2,347		2,347	2,000	2,000		2,000
	Treasurer Totals	34,262	0	34,262	46,064	46,064	0	46,064
	Administrative Assistant Salary	18,505		18,505	24,672	24,672		24,672
	AA Payroll Taxes	1,415		1,415	3,500	3,500		3,500
	Administrative Assistant Totals	19,920	0	19,920	28,172	28,172	0	28,172
65220	CSP Contract Staff	18,980		18,980	15,000	15,000		15,000
65410	HR Committee	1,069		1,069	1,000	1,000		1,000
	Allowance for 2027 Salary Adjustments:							0
	Salary adjustment allowance					8,000		8,000
	BOP, SECA offset, payroll taxes					4,000		4,000
	Personnel Totals	300,054	0	300,054	384,299	394,799		394,799

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budget
Use of Reserve Funds

		Projected Balance 12.31.26	Projected Income YE 2027		Projected Fund Use	Projected Amount	Projected Balance 12.31.27
Unrestricted Funds							
31100	Gatewood Fund Balance	110,000	0		Triennium accrual	(4,000)	86,000
					GA Accrual	(3,000)	
					SYW Scholarships	(17,000)	
				discuss	Tres Rios Foundation	0	
31110	Ministry Reserve Balance	7,500	0		None projected	0	7,500
31120	Year-end Reserves	6,900	0		None projected	0	6,900
	PILP CD	100,000	0		None projected	0	100,000
		224,400	0			(24,000)	200,400
Synod Designated							
31130	Disaster Assistance Fund	357					357
31140	Translation Fund	29,726	discuss				29,726
31150	Future Church	0					0
31180	Special Meetings	17,655					17,655
31190	*Synod Leadership Travel*	3,212					3,212
31220	COR Network	471					471
31222	CP Network	5,500	*				5,500
31250	Promotional Swag	1,957					1,957
31260	Network Reserves	30,121	discuss		Research/report on N4DR	(1,500.00)	28,621
31270	Cross Cultural Interns	0					0
31280	Presbytery Leader Formation	12,734					12,734
31300	International Mission Trips	0					0
31310	Mission Network Grants	0					0
32130	*Opiod Crisis*	500					500
32140	Network 4 Dismantly Racism	0	discuss			1,500.00	1,500
32150	Regional PDA	0					0
32155	ESL Scholarships	25,000					25,000
	Totals	127,233	0			0	127,233
Donor Restricted							
33130	David Robinson Fund--PF	3,600	1,000				4,600
33140	Seminary Scholarship	6,000	1,200				7,200
33150	*Young Adult Volunteers*	58,000	10,000				68,000
33160	Education Programs	1,500	500				2,000
33170	Peacemaking	1,800	650				2,450
33187	Aid for Pastors	14,500	3,449				17,949
33188	Church Extension	22,000	7,500				29,500
33189	National Missions in Texas	36,000	7,500				43,500
33200	Old Age Concerns	180,000	22,000				202,000
33210	Reserve for Higher Education	92,000	18,000		Reserve for Pan American Chaplain Support	(10,000)	100,000
33220	*Child & Youth Schroeder*	2,900	1,950				4,850
	Child & Youth Schroeder--PF	500	300				800
33900	SOPF scholarship	7,500	17,000				24,500
	Totals	426,300	91,049			(10,000)	507,349
	Totals	777,933	91,049			(34,000)	834,982

9.08.26

Synod of the Sun
Preliminary 2027 Budget
Use of TPF Funds

		Projected Balance 12.31.26	8% Projected Growth YE 2027	Projected Fund Use	Projected Amount	Projected Balance 12.31.27
Unrestricted Funds						
31100	Gatewood Fund Balance	812,000	65,000	None projected	0	877,000
31110	Ministry Reserve Balance	75,000	6,000	Funds to develop a new tool to assess and address equitable particpation by minority groups across the Synod's boundaries	(18,000)	63,000
31120	Year-end Reserves	71,000	5,700	None projected	0	76,700
	Subtotals	958,000	76,700		(18,000)	1,016,700
Synod Designated						
	Disaster Assistance Fund	19,500	1,600	None projected	0	21,100
	Synod Regional PDA Fund	123,000	9,800	SPDR Quarterly Support	(20,000)	112,800
	Hispanic MAAC Fund	74,500	3,300	(was $19,000 expense in 2026)	0	77,800
	Hispanic MAAPA Fund	51,500	4,100	None projected	0	55,600
	Subtotals	268,500	18,800		(20,000)	267,300
Donor Restricted						
	Crisp Scholarship Funds	146,000	11,700	Designated Distributions	(7,000)	150,700
	Crisp Endowment Funds	122,000	9,700	Designated Distributions	(5,000)	126,700
	Kerr/Munson Funds	1,830,000	146,000	Anticipated scholarships	(10,000)	1,966,000
	Subtotals	2,098,000	167,400		(22,000)	2,243,400
	Grand Toals	3,324,500	262,900		(60,000)	3,527,400

Attachment E

Synod of Sun Human Resources Committee

Fall, 2026

HR Committee Members: Rev. Jerry Boles with Palo Duro Presbytery, Elder Bill Dausses with Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, Elder Sandra Watson with Presbytery of the Pines, Rev. Polly Williams with Grace Presbytery, Leah McFadden with Presbytery of New Covenant, Rev. Jeff Simms with Presbytery of Southern Louisiana, who also represents the EP Forum, and Moderator Dr. Rev. Scott Campbell, just retired and former EP with Palo Duro Presbytery. Synod Leader Rev. Mitch Miller serves ex officio

Salient points to share:

The HR Committee spent most of June conducting in-person annual performance reviews with each Synod of the Sun employee.

The final edition of the HR Manual was published.

Jeff joined the committee in October in his new role. Scott was elected as moderator for another term.

Attachment F

2026 Fall Synod Assembly

Coordinating Team Report

It has been a busy year, like most are, for the Coordinating Team. For those of you who don't know, the Coordinating Team is made up of members including the past, current, and incoming Synod moderators along with the moderators of each commission and committee. The staff members work with the Coordinating Team.

We met in January and established a list of stated goals for the year, and we are well on our way to accomplishing those goals. (See goals below.) We've increased commissioner training; have hosted a very successful Commissioned Pastors/Small Church Leaders Retreat at Camp Gilmont earlier this month. More on that later.

The Empowering Committee is working hard to strengthen relationships with HMMN and working toward the goal of increasing Synod Youth Workshop participation and more that you will hear about in other committee reports.

The Coordinating Team oversees Synod's finances, nominations committees and hears reports from Synod staff including our fearless leader Mitch Miller, our Treasurer Bill Wiles and Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery, Libby Janes, along with working closely with our Human Resources committee on other staff members including Thomas Riggs, and Tammy Stepka.

You can see by the nominations listed below the hard work that Synod Leader Mitch Miller and others have put into the nominations process,

On behalf of the nominating committee, I place the following slate before you.

Nominations for Fall 2026

Synod Moderator

2027-2029 - Ed Wolf (New Covenant) MM W 2028-2030 Martha Bumpas (Tres Rios) FE W

Synod Commissioners At-Large

Class of 2029 - Keven Wright (Pines) 1st term MM B

Princeton Abaraoha (Grace) 1st term MM Af

Donita Nelson (Mission) 2nd term FM B

Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Foundation

Class of 2028 – Dana Mayfield – Palo Duro

Class of 2029 – Eric Dittman – Mission

Class of 2029- Shannon Robertson – Pines

Class of 2029 – Gerry Tyer – Grace

Class of 2029 – Todd Freeman – Eastern OK

Class of 2029- Brett Hampton – New Covenant

Synod of the Sun Trustees

Class of 2028 - Jim Barker – TX – Mission – MM - W

Class of 2028 – Dennis Laughlin – OK – Cimmaron – MRE - NA

Class of 2028 – Kevin Wright – LA – Pines – MM – B

It is with a very grateful and heavy heart that this will be my last meeting with the Synod of the Sun. What an honor and a privilege it has been to serve as commissioner, commissioner at large, vice moderator, moderator and now Coordinating Team Moderator for the past three years. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve on and as Moderator of the Connecting Committee and the Grants and Scholarships Commission for the Synod.

I know that I am leaving you all in very, very good hands and pray for the continued work of the Synod and its committees and commissions.

Blessings and peace,

Sharon Curry

Synod of the Sun's 2026 Stated Goals

In early January (4th through the 6th), we held the annual Synod Leadership Retreat at MO Ranch. At this gathering, we examined the work of the synod over the past year and reset our synod priorities for 2026. What follows are the top priorities we have set for our work in the coming year.

- Focus on Commissioners - build better scaffolds for Commissioner success: enabling support through training/orientation, setting expectations, clarity around roles and responsibilities, connection to passions and gifts, recruiting and retention.

- Racial Equality and Intercultural Communities – commit resources to race equity and relations across synod committee and commission functions. Foster healthier relationships with intercultural communities.

- Commissioned Pastors and Smaller Congregations – support Commissioned Pastors and support presbytery conversations seeking collaboration around CPs. Facilitate connections and support for smaller congregations across the synod.

- Grow Synod Youth Workshop – work to grow Synod Youth Workshop by 20%, focused on racial diversity and expanding participation to all presbyteries.

- Campus Ministry Network – create and enable a new Campus Ministry Network by tapping into the resources of our existing Covenant Partners.

- Officer Training – Share approaches and resources for officer training.

- Fulling Functioning Committees – supporting the work of synod committees with resources and fuller commissioner and at large membership.

- Review and Operations Manual – review the synod Operations manual, updating policies and procedures.

- HMMN – continue to support the growth and expansion of Hispanic Mission and Ministry Network initiatives.

- SPDR – continue to expand the vision of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery, supporting the creation of disaster response teams in every presbytery.

- Strengthen Spirituality – promote energy, intelligence, imagination, and love by becoming a more prayerful and spiritually motivated synod.

These are certainly not all that we will be doing, and there are many other important tasks, both required by our charge as a synod and those we have always found the need to do. But with so much on our plate and so many challenges facing the Church, we felt it necessary to give some guidance and focus on our efforts and that of the synod staff in the coming year.

Synod of the Sun Fall Assembly

Flourishing in the Spirit Commissioned Pastors/Small Church Leaders Retreat Report

The Flourishing in the Spirit Retreat was born from the Commissioned Pastors Network of the Synod. The network began about ten years ago and went into retirement during the COVID pandemic. Recently efforts have been working towards revitalizing this network and the retreat is the first step in bringing together commissioned pastors and small church leaders.

A team of volunteers, including Ben Davidson, Kristy Rodgers, Karen Rogers and Molly Casteel spent the last two years planning and preparing for this retreat. And what a retreat it was!

One of the highlights was watching two participants hug each other. One said, “I used to feel like I was in this all alone and then I looked around this room and realized I have all these people to support me. I am not alone!”

Another said, “Thank you for putting together the conference. I felt I was enriched by the topics and the people that were there. I was sorry that I missed Monday, but very glad I was able to spend the days listening and enjoying everyone's company.”

Twenty commissioned pastors and small church leaders gathered at Camp Gilmont earlier this month for a time of fellowship and learning how to better serve our churches. We heard from commissioned pastors, ordained pastors, church leaders, Synod staff members, national staff members and a representative from Austin Seminary. What a line-up!

Each day began with devotions and ended with worship, fellowship around the table during breaks and meals, and fellowship around the campfire in the evenings. Between these gatherings, participants took part in a full schedule of learning opportunities.

Workshops were lead by Synod members and staff

- Excellence in preaching
- Church security and disaster preparedness – Liby Janes SPDR
- Making a difference in your community

- Sermons for children—even when only one or two are present – Mitch Miller Synod Leader
- Church finances: a crash course – Bill Wiles, Synod Treasurer
- How to pastor when you don't have a pastor
- Elder training: Why do it?

Guest Speakers and Resources

- Cecei Suknaic Saulnier introduced Houses of Hope, a Lily grant-funded program that brings discernment practices to small churches.
- Josh Kerr discussed resources available through the Presbyterian Foundation, and Kevin Keeton outlined benefits available to commissioned pastors through the Board of Pensions.
- Miatta Wilson also traveled to the retreat to share resources from the PC(USA) Office of Christian Formation.

More than a gathering, this retreat reminded commissioned pastors and small church leaders that they do not serve alone. Participants returned home with practical resources, renewed confidence, and a stronger network of colleagues ready to encourage one another in ministry. The connections formed at Camp Gilmont will continue to strengthen congregations across the Synod—and we look forward to building on that spirit of learning, fellowship, and shared calling when we gather again next year.

Mark Your Calendars! We will be back next year!

September 13-17, 2027

Camp Gilmont, Gilmer, Texas

Attachment H

FERNCLIFF | MINISTRY UPDATE

Synod of the Sun • October 2026

Ferncliff continues to serve as a center of mission, ministry, education and hospitality for the Synod of the Sun and the wider Presbyterian Church. We are grateful for the congregations, volunteers and supporters who make this shared ministry possible.

2026 AT A GLANCE 1,000+ campers • 104 nature school students • 3,248 volunteer hours • 113,000 lbs of relief supplies shipped • Major Capital Projects Completed

Connection with Creation: Growing Opportunities for Children



Since January 2026, Ferncliff has served 104 children through Nature Preschool and WILDCraft homeschool day programs. WILDCraft expanded from 14 first- and second-graders to 21 students in grades one through four. Seven families received partial tuition assistance.

Our lead preschool educators attended the national Natural Start Alliance Conference, where colleague Hollie Sanders presented on adapting Leave No Trace principles for preschool-aged children. We plan to grow both programs and share our educational model with other educators.

Summer Camp: Connecting Children and Congregations



More than 1,000 campers joined us this summer from the Presbytery of Arkansas, Presbytery of the Pines and three Oklahoma presbyteries. Ferncliff also hosted a joint confirmation camp for Arkansas and the Pines, showing what congregations can accomplish together. Camp continues to foster friendships, confidence, faith and a connection with Creation.

Disaster Assistance and Mission: Faith in Action



The Disaster Assistance Center has sent 46 shipments to 18 states, including Hawaii, totaling about 113,000 pounds of kits and supplies. Another 85,410 pounds arrived from 21 states. Operations have expanded following the Brethren Service Center's 2025 closure. Volunteers have served an estimated 3,248 hours. By October's end, we expect 14 mission teams (about 180 people from 12 states). A residential volunteer supports daily operations, and four teams are booked for summer 2027, with three more inquiries.

Retreats, Conferences and Presbyterian Partnerships



Ferncliff provides a welcoming setting for fellowship, learning, discernment and renewal. We host CREDO events focused on clergy wellness and welcomed Presbyterians for Earth Care last fall. We are especially pleased to host the Synod of the Sun retreat this year!

Connect. Inspire. Transform. Capital Campaign



Ferncliff stream restoration, 2026. Photo provided by Ferncliff.

This year we completed Ferncliff Youth Commons, a dedicated dining and gathering space for youth that also increases capacity for adult groups, and our Stream Restoration Project, removing the old dam and restoring a more natural stream channel. Both projects strengthen our ministry and our commitment to creation care.

We have raised approximately $6.3 million toward our $7.6 million campaign goal. Additional funds are needed to complete the Center for Healing and Restoration, expanding opportunities for retreat, healing and renewal.

A Shared Ministry for the Future

As Ferncliff approaches its 90th anniversary in 2027, we are deeply grateful for the Synod of the Sun and its congregations. Your partnership helps children discover Creation, young people grow in faith, volunteers respond to human need, and pastors and congregations find rest and renewal.

We invite congregations across the Synod to send campers, organize mission teams, host retreats, volunteer and support this ministry. Ferncliff is a center of mission and ministry for the entire Synod of the Sun. Thank you for being part of this work.

COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

between

Synod of the Sun, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
and Gilmont Camp & Conference Center

A shared commitment to connection, collaboration, and faithful service through Christian hospitality across the Synod of the Sun.

I. Introduction

This covenant affirms the historic and ongoing relationship between Gilmont Camp & Conference Center (Gilmont) and the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (Synod). As distinct yet missionally aligned entities, we commit to mutual support, accountability, and collaboration in faithful service to God, the Church, and the world.

Grounded in God's faithfulness, this covenant expresses our shared commitment to continued partnership, building on past and present ministry for the sake of future mission.

II. Legal Standing and Governance

Gilmont is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in Texas and governed by a Board of Directors. Its mission is to cultivate a safe, sacred space where all are invited to grow closer to God, creation, others, and themselves. Its vision is that Gilmont's guests will be grounded in creation, filled with wonder, and inspired to glorify God and serve others.

The Synod is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), serving a four-state region by fostering connection, collaboration, and innovation among presbyteries, congregations, and ministries.

This covenant reflects the relationship between two legally distinct institutions united by shared purpose. It clarifies expectations, strengthens accountability, and provides a framework for ongoing collaboration and periodic review. Nothing in this covenant changes the independent governance, ownership, or fiduciary responsibilities of either party.

III. Shared Purpose and Mission

Through this covenant, Gilmont and the Synod commit to:

- Celebrate a shared call to serve the Church and the world;
- Recognize Gilmont as a covenant ministry partner of the Synod;
- Create pathways for collaboration in Christian formation, leadership development, hospitality, service, creation care, and other shared priorities;
- Deepen relationships with presbyteries, congregations, leaders, and ministries across the Synod; and
- Strengthen the connectional life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through shared ministry and mutual encouragement.

IV. Commitments of Gilmont Camp & Conference Center

Gilmont, through its Board and staff, commits to:

- Offer hospitality, staff leadership, and facilities for Synod-related programs, retreats, conferences, and ministry opportunities when aligned with Gilmont's mission and capacity;
- Welcome opportunities to collaborate with the Synod on programs and initiatives that serve the Church and the Synod's broader constituency;
- Cultivate relationships with the Synod, its presbyteries, and congregations, and seek collaborative ways to align resources in service to shared goals;
- Provide regular updates to the Synod regarding significant initiatives, program developments, capital projects, and emerging ministry opportunities;
- Maintain standards of excellence in safety, Christian hospitality, stewardship of creation, and faith formation consistent with Gilmont's mission and the commitments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and
- Welcome appropriate participation by Synod leaders in collaborative, advisory, and ministry-planning conversations.

V. Commitments of the Synod of the Sun

The Synod, through its leadership and staff, commits to:

- Recognize Gilmont as a covenant partner in shared ministry and include Gilmont, when appropriate, in strategic conversations, leadership development, and mission collaboration;
- Consider Gilmont as a host site for Synod-led programs and encourage presbyteries and congregations to consider Gilmont when planning retreats, trainings, conferences, and ministry gatherings;
- Collaborate with Gilmont to promote, develop, or co-sponsor programs that advance mutual priorities;
- Interpret and promote Gilmont's ministry and impact through Synod communications, networks, and direct engagement with presbyteries and congregations;
- Include Gilmont among the Synod's network of ministry partners eligible for financial and connectional support, and encourage relational and financial support from across the Synod; and
- Consider Gilmont staff and Board members as valued participants in Synod working groups, networks, and advisory teams when appropriate.

VI. Covenant Maintenance, Review, and Renewal

This covenant shall be reviewed and renewed every five (5) years, or at the request of either party. A review team composed of representatives from both Gilmont and the Synod will assess progress, celebrate shared ministry, and recommend updates in response to evolving needs, opportunities, and mission contexts.

VII. Approval and Authorization

By signing below, the representatives of Gilmont Camp & Conference Center and the Synod of the Sun affirm this covenant partnership and commit to its shared purposes and responsibilities.

_____	_____
Synod Leader and Stated Clerk, Synod of the Sun	Executive Director, Gilmont Camp & Conference Center
_____ Date	8/22/2026 Date
_____	_____
Moderator, Synod of the Sun	Chair, Gilmont Board of Directors
_____ Date	10/12/26 Date

Attachment J

Matthew 25

"For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

For more information:

(202) 630-6225

Email
info@presfedchap.org

website
www.presfedchap.org

Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

For more than 50 years, Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies has answered a vital call: endorsing Presbyterian chaplains to bring hope, compassion, and spiritual care to those served by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the military.

Inspired by Matthew 25, our chaplains carry Christ's love into places of service, sacrifice, confinement, and healing—meeting people in life's most difficult moments and reminding them that they are seen, valued, and never alone.





This calling is more than simply being present. It is love set in motion—a faithful commitment to walk alongside our Veterans Affairs, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and military communities with hope and compassion through every season of life. As shared by one of our chaplains:

> "*One day, I received a call from my command about a Soldier who had posted an alarming and very concerning message on his social media platform.*
>
> *I drove to his home. We stood in his front yard and talked for over an hour. The Soldier eventually agreed to go to the hospital with me. The psychiatrist told me they were concerned about him and would keep him at the hospital for further treatment.*
>
> *I count it a blessing that God gave me this opportunity to connect with a vulnerable human being and help him get on the path of healing.*"

Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

Newsletter SUMMER 2026

Pastoral Letter Sent to our Serving VA. FBOP. and Military Chaplains

Grace and peace to you,

It is a true privilege to serve as your endorsing agent and to walk alongside you in this sacred pastoral calling. I welcome your calls and emails and count it an honor to listen, pray, and support you as you faithfully shepherd those entrusted to your care through both the joys and the challenges of ministry.

These are not easy days. We live in a time marked by uncertainty, change, and at times disruption. Decisions beyond your control may shape your daily work and affect those you serve. Such seasons can be unsettling and raise difficult questions. Yet even here, we are grounded in the steady promise of Scripture: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). The One who has called you remains near—your refuge in uncertainty and your strength in every demand.

Your pastoral calling has not changed. The ministry entrusted to you remains deeply important and divinely appointed. You are called to be a steady presence in the lives of others—to listen with compassion, to pray with sincerity, to lead with humility, and to faithfully bear witness to God's nearness and grace. Through your quiet perseverance and daily faithfulness, you embody the hope you proclaim.

Even in seasons when the work feels heavy or unseen, your calling matters. The care you offer, the prayers you lift, and the presence you provide are sacred acts of ministry that God continues to use in powerful ways.

Please remember that you are not alone. Doug and I are here for you, grateful for the opportunity to offer encouragement and support, just as others have done for us.

I encourage you to reach out—whether in a moment of need or simply for connection. It would be our joy to listen, to pray, and to walk with you wherever you find yourself today. May the Lord sustain you in your calling, strengthen your heart for the work of shepherding, and fill you with His peace as you continue to serve Him faithfully.

With gratitude and prayer,

Dennis E Hysom

Field Notes

In October, Andrew Stockstill and his Religious Professional visited a team of Marines operating forward, where they are part of a multinational coalition exercise. There, he led 2 Bible studies and 2 Protestant Divine Services, including Communion. It was a beautiful gathering of young service members from various nations who demonstrated a hunger for the Word and opportunities to explore and grow in faith.

When Bo Seok (Peter) Soe transitioned from 13 years of pastoral ministry at Good Stewards Church (KPCA) to enter the Army Chaplaincy, he still wrestled with doubts about whether this was truly God's will. But through the ministry this year, he has found confirmation and peace. His brigade chaplain attended his first award ceremony and affirmed that God has indeed called him to serve here for His glory and for the spiritual well-being of Soldiers.

Young G. Jung, staff chaplain at Jesse Brown Veteran Affairs Medical Center was recently assigned to Palliative Care and bereavement programs at the VA Hospital. He writes: From the moment a veteran or their family member faced a critical or end-of-life situation, I was committed to providing timely and compassionate spiritual support. Within 24 hours of ICU, palliative, or family contact, I would reach out to offer comfort and reassurance

Updates

ANNUAL TRAINING

The PFC will conduct a time of professional training, fellowship, renewal, and shared faith for endorsed chaplains and their families. We will gather at either Calvin Crest from June 21–26, or at Montreat—either virtually or in person—from August 10–14. May these days be a blessing of rest, connection, and spiritual growth for all who attend. This year's theme is: *Resilience in Times of Transition.*

AWARDS

Congratulations to Ch (LT) Garrett A. Burns for his recognition by the Military Chaplains Association for his ministry and leadership providing for the religious freedom and spiritual welfare of the men and women of the armed forces. Chaplain Burns was awarded the MCA Distinguished Service Award for 2025.



RETIREMENT

Ch (COL) Martin Cho retired from the Army in May 2026. We are grateful for his service to God.



GRADUATION

Congratulations to
Air Force Chaplains:
Ch, Capt Joseph Song &
Ch, 1 Lt David Taekjin Kim.
They graduated from the Basic Chaplain Course on 15 May 2026.



General Assembly Presence

Dennis Hysom was able to set up a table at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church General Assembly and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly. We look forward to getting the word out about Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies to the wider church.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Joseph Kim, Air Force Chaplain, writes: Last February, I had the privilege of serving as Chaplain of the Day at the Georgia State Capitol. As I stood before the House Representatives, I felt a profound connection to a legacy of selfless service and its lasting impact. I chose to speak on the theme of hope, drawing strength from the enduring promise found in our faith. I shared a personal story, my experience at Tower 22 on January 28th, 2024, the day our brave brothers and sisters in arms, Georgia natives, were killed in action. I recounted the solemn memorial service, the empty boots, helmets, and rifles, and the heart-wrenching silence when the first sergeant called out the names of the fallen: Specialist Kennedy Sanders, Specialist Brianna Moffett, and Sergeant William Jerome Rivers. I wanted the representatives to understand that even in the face of profound loss, hope and resilience are possible. I challenged them, as representatives of the people, to live lives of sacrifice, giving, serving, and loving others, to listen to the needs of their constituents, especially the challenging circumstances faced by military families, and to legislate laws that protect our children and promote justice. I closed with a prayer, asking God to grant them wisdom, strength, and compassion, and to bless their service with humility and integrity. It was my hope that in sharing this message, rooted in both personal experience and faith, I could offer a moment of encouragement and reflection for those who serve our state.



Haley Stephenson, VA Chaplain, writes: As a chaplain serving multiple outpatient behavioral care teams, I often assist patients in exploring how their spiritual needs intersect with their mental and emotional well-being. For example, a patient was able to share with me their concerns about ongoing auditory hallucinations that they have managed alone for the last 20 years. I provided spiritual support to this patient regarding the sense of shame they carry about these hallucinations while also relaying the patient's concerns to the appropriate care team. The patient had been working with mental health providers for over a year, and he had not felt comfortable addressing these concerns with them due to their own shame. I highlight this story because it shows the unique way chaplains are utilized in the outpatient setting by the VHA to ensure patients receive the care they need, and how chaplains can assist patients working through shame that inhibits access to care. Please pray that this kind of creative ministry can continue and expand at this VA and other VA systems.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD. cont.

Chaplain Cheol Yi, Navy Chaplain, writes: As a KPCA minister and Chaplain, I remember that our first and most important goal is to be faithful to what God has called me to do, a higher calling. This is my spiritual core value for the chaplain ministry, which is the foundation for why the ministry exists and how it will achieve its goals, often grounded in specific biblical convictions and a vision from God. I appreciate the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy's support in establishing a strong biblical foundation for my chaplaincy ministry. It provides clear spiritual direction and intentionality for my serving Sailors, helping them to pursue God's call amidst other challenges and pressures. Our denominational teaching bridges theological doctrine and practical ministry activities by outlining core values, principles, and goals to guide decision-making in the ministry field, focus resources, and ensure effectiveness in impacting people, making disciples, and glorifying God.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Thank you PFC partners in ministry for your good support for those of us out here in the field. May the care you extend to others return to you in kind and may God richly bless you in your work.

For over 50 years, the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies (PFC) has lived out the call of Matthew 25 by supporting our chaplains as they minister among those in Veterans Affairs hospitals, federal prisons, and the military—people often carrying heavy burdens and in need of hope. The PFC recruits, equips, sustains, and endorses ministers who bring compassion, presence, hope, and spiritual care to people in some of life's most challenging circumstances. This ministry is a celebration of over five decades of faithful leadership, compassionate service, and the enduring promise that when we care for "the least of these," we serve Christ himself.

As we give thanks for this legacy, we also look ahead with gratitude and hope. Please pray for our chaplains, their families, and all those they serve and inspire the church to continue supporting this vital ministry of presence, mercy, and love.

Donate online: *presfedchap.org*

NOTE: All of our funding is crowd-funded and community-sourced from sister denominations and local fundraisers directed to the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies nonprofit, a 501(c)(3) organization, and is tax-deductible. Any financial support provided by our donors and supporters is greatly appreciated and is essential to the continuation of our programs and services. We are committed to transparency and accountability, and we ensure that all donations are utilized in the most effective and efficient manner possible to achieve our mission. Thank you for your support!

Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Matthew 25

CHAPLAINCY: IS IT FOR YOU?

As you discern God's calling to ministry, the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies invites you to consider using your spiritual gifts as a Federal Bureau of Prisons, Veterans Affairs, or Military Chaplain.

CONNECT WITH US!

Please contact us if you are considering federal chaplaincy and/or if you have a minister or candidate under your care who is considering federal chaplaincy.

Endorsement by Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies is required for federal chaplaincy programs, but does not guarantee an applicant will be accepted into a federal chaplaincy program.

Applications and information are available online: *presfedchap.org*

STAFF

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CONTACT US!

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Waynesville, NC 28786

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We are a joint ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Attachment K

How We Care for

YOUTH IN NEED

Workforce Education

- On-campus jobs and life skills training
- Career field trips and guest speakers
- Goal-setting and financial literacy

Recreation & Creativity

- Art, gardening, sports and music
- Off-campus enrichment like swimming and field trips
- Opportunities for creativity, fun and self-expression

Mental & Physical Health

- Stable residential care in Monticello
- Nutritious meals and safe living spaces
- Individual and group counseling
- 24/7 trauma-informed staff support

Training for Foster Families

- Online Resource Parent Training
- Expert-led classes on trauma, mental health and communication
- Supportive community for foster and adoptive parents

EVERY DAY ON CAMPUS

Trauma-Informed Care
Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) helps youth heal from early-life trauma.

Professional Counseling
Focused on behavior, education, relationships and substance abuse recovery.

Academic Support
Tutors and GED programs to strengthen educational outcomes.

Independent Living Skills
Cooking, budgeting, social skills and chores with earned allowances.

Spiritual Growth
Opportunities for church, Bible study and personal Bibles.

Fitness Activities
Basketball, weight training, paddle boats, bikes and instructor-led classes.

Nutritious Meals
Prepared under USDA guidelines.

Transportation
Support for school, activities, medical, court and cultural needs.

Basic Needs
Clothing, hygiene items, supplies and recreational activities.

TRANSITION SERVICES

Empowering youth with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive as independent adults.

- ✓ Financial literacy classes
- ✓ Job search skills and support
- ✓ Life skills classes
- ✓ On-campus work program
- ✓ Family stabilization
- ✓ College prep and tours
- ✓ Healthy relationships

Vera Lloyd is accredited through the Council on Accreditation and is one of the first childcare facilities in Arkansas to use the TBRI® model of care.



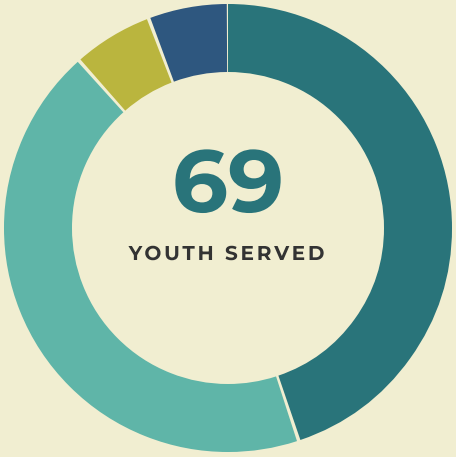


Give youth the tools they need to thrive as adults.

SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS ›

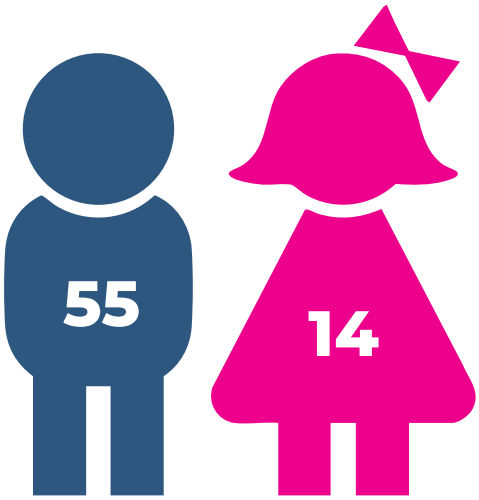
Youth Demographics

LIVES CHANGED



RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Black	31 · 44.9%
White	30 · 43.5%
Bi-Racial	4 · 5.8%
Hispanic	4 · 5.8%



55 boys 79.7%

14 girls 20.3%

13–19
age range served

15½
average age at referral



BASKETBALL SHOE DRIVE

Every player deserves shoes that fit.

Help us provide basketball shoes for any resident who wants to play.

LACE UP A PLAYER ›

Every number is a young person with a future.

GIVE HOPE ›

VERA LLOYD
PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY SERVICES
est. 1923

WORKFORCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Vera Lloyd empowers young men and women in need to build their futures from the ground up.

Our goal is to ensure that every resident leaves our care with a clear pathway to a career, education, job training, or military service.





ABOUT WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Career Planning

Residents take the O*NET assessment and review viable career pathways with the program coordinator.

On-The-Job Training

Residents apply, interview, and work. They learn responsibility, open a savings account, and earn a stipend.

Hands-on Learning

Residents use on-campus simulators in driving, electrical engineering, welding, childcare, and cosmetology.

Industry Partnerships

SeaArk welders provide real-world training and simulator coaching. Residents toured the SeaArk jobsite and the Welding Academy in Jacksonville, AR.

GET INVOLVED

If your organization wants to get involved or you are interested in learning more about Vera Lloyd's Workforce Education Program, don't hesitate to reach out.

501-666-8195

MarciRobertson@veralloyd.org

VeraLloyd.org

Administrative Office
1501 N. University, Ste 345
Little Rock, AR 72207

Annie B. Wells Campus
745 Old Warren Road
Monticello, AR 7166

VERA LLOYD
PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY SERVICES
est. 1923

RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING (RPT)

Vera Lloyd's Free Program of Education & Support for Foster & Adoptive Parents

TOPICS FROM 2026

- The Impact of Trauma on Development
- Understanding Attachment Styles
- Supporting Children Through Foster Care Transitions
- Positive Parenting Strategies for Children with Autism and other Behaviors

ALL ABOUT RPT



Expert Led
Program is run by a licensed counselor with experience raising foster and adoptive children



Interactive Classes
Classes are conversational and topics are based on partipant feedback & requests



Online Format
Removes financial, geographical, and childcare barriers



Builds a Community
Provides an outlet and a sense of community for participating families

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

"Helpful to know we are on the right track in teaching our foster kids... also helping us with our bio kids as well."

"We were blessed with a good group that was eager to chime in and it's always a blessing to learn from other foster parents."

501-666-8195 VeraLloydParenting@gmail.com VeraLloyd.org

Attachment L

Tres Rios Border Ministry Foundation
Report to the Synod of the Sun
October 26-29, 2026

I. Matters of Information

The Tres Rios border foundation's mission is to inspire, equip and connect PC(USA) congregations on the US- Mexico border and beyond-toward loving God and neighbor. We are ecumenical and interfaith in mission focusing on transformation from grounding in the familiar, encountering the unknown, expanding narratives and perspectives, and imagining new futures. The Tres Rios Presbytery Border Ministry Foundation is the "Presbyterian Portal" to all things concerning border ministry in El Paso/Juarez while we partner with churches and organizations in the community.

We are grateful for the service of Board President Rev. Sue Dickson President (retired – El Paso) who will be leaving the Board. She has led with vision, wisdom, and compassion. We honor her time and expertise in leading the board the past several years. Current members of the board are: Bill Rose Secretary (Grace, El Paso) Vanessa Johnson (FPC, El Paso); Connie Chapman (Grace, El Paso) Rev. Tim Gray (FPC, Leavenworth, Kansas), Carol Slocomb (FPC, Alpine,TX), Rev. Sam Weddington (Midland, TX) and Rev. Dori Hjalmersen (Kingsville, TX). The Rev. Marta Pumroy (Tres Rios Presbytery) serves as the border ministry coordinator and is also serving as the co-moderator of the 227th General Assembly PC (USA) Rev. John Nelsen (retired - El Paso) is a very active as the partner liaison and Rev. Matt Miles assists (FPC, Fort Davis) as the Vision and Outreach Presbyter for Tres Rios.

In 2025 we assisted eight different partners whose reach goes beyond their location. The Abara network network in the El Paso/Juarez metro area continues to provide, caring for basic needs such as food, shelter, and leader care assisting over 690 Individuals. Since January: On the El Paso side, we have helped by partnering with the county for a "Gateway for Growth Grant" that included citizenship classes and resources. In Juarez, we cared for the caretakers, assisting with rest and renewal events for shelter leaders . We partnered with a human rights group with the salaries of a psychologist and social worker. Of the 32 people served, 16 were male and 16 female, with ages ranging from 2 to 56 years. They were predominantly young adults in the 25-37 age range. Also in 2026, we assisted a network of 8 shelters in Juarez with their water/utility expenses as funding sources were cut. We expanded our direct support to include food for a community run lunch program by the Tarahuamura people that feeds 150 people per day. We continue to support Pasos de Fe, who have been sheltering migrant families who have been released after being kidnapped.

We are grateful for the funds from the Synod of the Sun to support this mission. In 2026 we were joined by 5 groups (churches, presbyteries, organizations) and 30 individuals who supported this work and we helped host the Synod of the Sun meeting in October to experience the importance and impact of the work we do and the space we are in.

We continue to offer presentations, resources, and preaching as ways to bring the mission and message “out” to congregations and we invite groups “in” for border encounter experiences. In 2025, we spoke to over 1,000 people and with the exposure of the co-moderator of the General Assembly, countless more are hearing about the ministry of the Tres Rios Presbytery.

Since we last met in October, we have hosted groups from: First Presbyterian Davenport, First Presbyterian, Mount Pleasant, the Presbytery of Long Island, Grace Presbyterian El Paso, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and will be hosting North Central Presbytery in December with four more scheduled for 2027. We have had a presence of solidarity in Chicago, San Antonio, and Minneapolis, Eastern Iowa, Salt Lake City, the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Lakes and Prairies Synod School. We have partnered in advocacy with World Relief, Free Families, and the county of El Paso’s Office of New Americans. Marta attended and assisted at the Faithful Response Gathering in New Braunfels with PDA’s Omar Salinas Chacon and next month Marta Pumroy-Cordero will attend the Mesoamerican Mission Migration Network meeting in Guatemala hosted by Global Ecumenical Liaison Joseph Russ.

If you would like to learn more please visit our website tresriosborderfoundation.org

Please show the following video as part of the report:

From Austin to El Paso: Experiencing the Borderlands

TRES RIOS
BORDER FOUNDATION

PC(USA) ON THE BORDER AND BEYOND

MISSION: Our mission is to inspire, equip, and connect PC(USA) congregations on the U.S.-Mexico border and beyond – toward loving God and neighbor.

We are Presbyterian in name and
ecumenical and interfaith in mission.
We are one participant in a wide network of shelters on **both sides of the border** in collaboration with Abara our proximity partner.

We invite you to collaborate with Tres Rios Presbyterian Border Foundation as we join where God is already on the move.

Focus and Action

Our focus areas are:

Narrative Change | Systems Change | Personal Change

Our Mission is applied in three ways:

● Border Response

We accompany shelter leaders and migrants through meeting the most pressing needs on both sides of the border in El Paso, TX and Juarez Mexico

● Border Proximity

Our office is housed at our border network partner site – a historic crossing 15 feet from the border, where we can welcome in, or zoom out- walking alongside and listening to our partners in solidarity.

● Border Encounters

We invite PC(USA) leaders, presbyteries, and congregations to attend 3 day encounters for education, personal transformation, and action.

Ways to Engage

Speaking or Presentations:
We are available to speak with your congregations, mission committees, at your retreat, gathering, or preach at a worship service.

Border Encounters
Gather a group to learn and reflect on a border encounter.

Do other Voices Come to Mind?
Introduce us to anyone you recommend to support, learn, and transform with us.

Beyond the Borderlands
Extend welcome and advocacy in your own communities.

THROUGH OUR HOSPITALITY SITES, SUPPORTERS HELP US LIVE OUT:

Welcome on the Border – Migrant/ Asylum Seekers/ Refugee Care

Health on the Border – Healthcare - Trauma Care /Renewal, LGBTQ+ Refuge

Youth on the Border – Child Development - Youth Empowerment

Christ on the Border – Christian Faith Development

TO CONNECT WITH US - CALL OR SEND AN EMAIL

Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero | Border Coordinator
rev.marta@trpborder.org
319-360-2757

Rev. Dr. John Nelsen | Partner Liaison
johntrpborder@gmail.com
915-781-6350

WAYS TO GIVE

Your gift impacts both sides of the border.

For Giving and FAQ's, visit
TresRiosBorderFoundation.org

QR Code to Paypal

Send funds to- Tres Rios Presbytery
Memo Line: Tres Rios Border Foundation
1201 W Wall St
Midland, TX 79701
Phone: 432-682-5297

Attachment M

Everyone Matters

EVERGREEN LIFE SERVICES



everyone matters.
evergreen
LIFE SERVICES

Evergreen Life Services



Evergreen Life Services (ELS) is a charitable, non-profit organization that provides a full range of professional services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). ELS was started in 1959 as a Presbyterian ministry to provide community-based services to local people with disabilities in Northwest Louisiana. Prior to that time, people with severe IDD were usually sent to state institutions. Since its beginning, ELS has expanded into seven states and now serves nearly 1,000 people with disabilities.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES

Evergreen serves people with many different types of disabilities. In almost all cases, these are severe and irreversible impairment of the brain, often present from birth or arising during childhood. These disabilities may be caused by genetic abnormalities, diseases and infections, or injury. Generally, people with these disabilities face lifelong challenges and usually need some level of professional support throughout their lifespan. With the right support and training, they can lead productive and fulfilling lives.



EMPHASIZING ABILITIES

As a nationally recognized leader in serving people with IDD Evergreen focuses on the abilities of the people we serve. From our perspective, the glass is always half full. In almost all cases, people with IDD can greatly improve their level of functioning with the right professional support and training. With decades of experience and modern best practices, ELS works hard to enable every person it serves to reach his or her highest potential for independence, self-care and productivity.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Evergreen operates a wide variety of programs and services, including community homes, day work centers, supportive living and employment services, art centers, and social enterprise projects. ELS residential services are designed to keep people safe and comfortable in a normal community home while learning the basic life skills to become as independent as possible.

Our day programs empower people with disabilities to express their creativity and desire to work, helping them engage productively in a variety of work options with the opportunity to earn a paycheck. Even a small paycheck provides a huge boost to their self-esteem and a sense of dignity.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Founded over 65 years ago as a Presbyterian ministry, ELS is guided in its work by Christian principles, and, most importantly, the words of Jesus:

"Whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you do for me."

ELS sees the people it serves as truly the innocent children of God, who were born into this life on a difficult path and who deserve every amount of help and support we can provide for them. Although ELS maintains a strong connection to many Presbyterian churches, we provide services to people with disabilities of all faiths and beliefs. Evergreen depends on the churches in the communities it serves to be strong partners in this important ministry.

OUR FUNDING

Like other providers of services for people with disabilities, ELS depends on funding from the state and federal government sources to cover basic costs. Proper care can be costly, and it is far beyond the means of most families to cover it privately.

Unlike some other service providers, Evergreen is a non-profit charity and does not pay dividends to shareholders. Evergreen can focus its energy and resources on making life as good as possible for the people we serve. Although Evergreen receives government funding, it is not enough to cover all of the needs of the people we serve. We depend on the generosity of concerned people, like you, to sustain our commitment to the health, safety and comfort of those entrusted to our care.

Evergreen Life Services works hard to enable every person it serves to reach his or her highest potential for independence, self-care and productivity.





THE UNMET NEEDS

The people we serve depend on the generosity of charitable donors to provide many of the benefits of daily life that we all take for granted. For example, when the people we serve need dental work, their available health coverage may pay only for extractions. To provide normal dental care, such as fillings and cleanings that we all take for granted, our clients must depend on privately donated funds. There are many other daily needs that rely on private funds. Evergreen also depends on donated funds to maintain its commitment to excellence. Unlike some programs that simply "warehouse" people with disabilities at the lowest possible cost, Evergreen insists on hiring well-qualified staff to provide life-enriching activities for the people it serves. State funding is continuously shrinking, so private financial support becomes more critical each year.

YOUR ROLE

As a thoughtful person who cares about people with disabilities, you can play an important role in making their daily lives healthier, safer and more comfortable. Your donation, large or small, goes directly to improve services and the quality of life for people with disabilities. Because most of the people served by Evergreen will require life-long care, your continuing commitment with a regular annual or monthly contribution will have a large impact on the well-being of people struggling with these disabilities. Our promise to you is that we will use your donations solely for the benefit of people with disabilities, and we will keep you well-informed about the impact of your donations on a regular basis.

MOVING TOWARD TOMORROW

Evergreen has continuously expanded over the past six decades, now serving seven states, often at the invitation of state authorities who recognize that Evergreen can provide higher-quality services for people with IDD. In some cases, Evergreen has worked with state and local authorities to move people with disabilities out of state institutions and sub-standard private facilities and into comfortable, well-run high-quality community homes.

This process continues with your help. There are still many people with IDD who reside in uncomfortable, inadequate facilities with little privacy or basic human dignity. We trust that you, like us, feel that people with disabilities deserve a normal, enriched life that provides more than just a bed, three meals, and a day spent watching television.

Please join with us in fulfilling Jesus' exhortation that we properly care for his beloved children with disabilities among us.



Our Mission

SERVE. PROVIDE. CHAMPION. We serve, provide for and champion individuals with disabilities.

Serve:

- Support individuals with disabilities physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Help them find self-worth and abilities.
- Teach basic life and social skills, job and financial training and more.

Provide:

- Quality care for medical and behavioral needs.
- Opportunities for meaningful employment.
- An independent and abundant life.
- A place they can call home.
- Love, acceptance, value and friendship.

Champion:

- Advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- Help society understand disabilities and how they can help.
- Support individuals in making their dreams a reality.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Director of Development or Executive Director in your area or call your local division office. | **www.evergreenls.org**

everyone matters.
evergreen
LIFE SERVICES

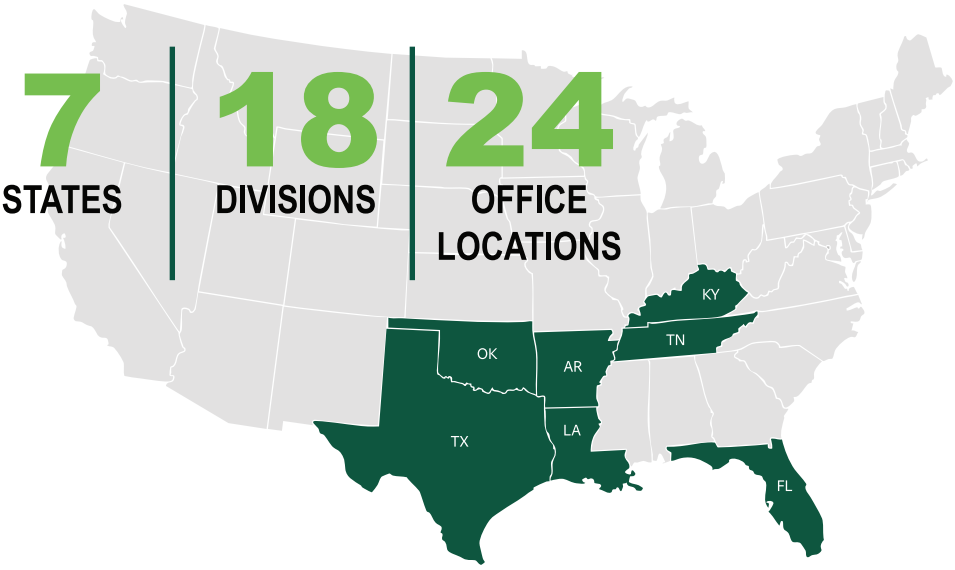
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evergreen
LIFE SERVICES

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS
Impact at a Glance

ESTABLISHED
1959
AS A FAITH-BASED CHARITABLE NOT-FOR-PROFIT, 501(c)3.



7 STATES | **18** DIVISIONS | **24** OFFICE LOCATIONS



$85.8 MILLION
2026 - 2027 FISCAL YEAR REVENUE BUDGET

92% OF EVERY DOLLAR EVERGREEN RECEIVES GOES DIRECTLY TO HELPING THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

NEARLY **1,000** INDIVIDUALS SERVED

927 FULL-TIME STAFF

633 PART-TIME STAFF

1,400 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STAFF

Community Homes,
There are 92 homes, each serving 6 to 8 individuals, throughout Texas and Louisiana.

Supported Living Services
A total of 354 individuals receive support through Respite Care and Family Support Services.

Supervised Apartments
Three apartment units are operated in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Vocational Programs
Prioritized support and competitive employment opportunities for individuals.

Abundant Healthcare Clinic,
Evergreen's healthcare clinic, specializes in treating people with I/DD

Foster Care Services
Support and care for children and foster parents.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
HEAVENDROPT · Possibilities Antique Mall · Cultural Art Centers · Horticulture Centers

Corporate Office: 2101 Highway 80 | Haughton, LA 71037
318.949.5500 | www.evergreenls.org | www.facebook.com/evergreenls



EVERGREEN

Exclamations!

JUNE 2026

YOU HELPED WRITE DAMON'S VICTORY STORY

For many people, cancer treatment can feel isolating and overwhelming, but because of you, Damon did not have to fight his battle alone.

There are moments in life when time seems to stop. For Damon, that moment came when he reached for the cancer bell, surrounded by the Evergreen staff, peers, and friends who stood beside him throughout every step of his journey. Then, with the same optimism that carried him through months of fighting, he rang the bell, marking the end of his treatments and the beginning of a new chapter full of hope. There were tears of happiness, relief, and pride as Damon smiled, threw his hands in the air, and shouted, "Yay!" celebrating overcoming what once felt impossible.



When Damon was diagnosed with cancer in the fall of 2024, everything changed. The diagnosis was difficult for him. While there were hard days and moments when frustration and anger surfaced, Damon remained determined to finish treatment and stay positive through it all. That determination was strengthened by the support system surrounding him at Evergreen.

Damon lives in Bowling Green, Kentucky and participates in Evergreen's Adult Day Training program. He spends his days building independence, attending cooking class, and encouraging everyone around him with his favorite phrase: "Good job!" Outgoing, cheerful, and endlessly sociable, Damon sees everyone as a friend and can spark a conversation with anyone he meets.

His medical coordinator, Connie Johnson, helped ensure he received the care and coordination he needed throughout treatments. Direct Support Professionals like Artie Barnett encouraged Damon daily. Reflecting on his journey, Artie shared, "He's taught me that you can do anything you put your mind to while staying positive through it all." The Evergreen team walked beside him through every appointment, every challenge, and every victory. "Seeing my friends support me helped," Damon shared simply.

Today, Damon is back to doing what he loves most: spending time with friends, going into the community, encouraging others, and enjoying his favorite food, McDonald's hamburgers.

Your gift helps provide life-changing services that ensure individuals facing serious medical challenges never have to face them alone. Donations support programs like Adult Day Training, care coordination, transportation to appointments, daily support staff, and social engagement opportunities that help individuals like Damon continue living full, hopeful lives, even during life's hardest moments.

Please return the enclosed envelope, scan the QR code, or visit evergreenls.org to donate today and help create more victories like Damon's.

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Scan to donate!

How We Serve

For many of us, it's the everyday moments we rarely stop to think about such as going to work, sharing laughter with friends, learning something new, falling in love, or simply having a place to call home. For many individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, those moments can depend on having someone who believes in their potential.

Across seven states, Evergreen Life Services serves nearly 1,000 individuals by creating opportunities for independence, connection, and purpose.

Some individuals are learning to cook, manage finances, and navigate daily life independently. Others are discovering talents through art and music therapy, building friendships through community activities, or gaining confidence through meaningful employment. Jennifer and David, members of the City of Enid cleaning crew, have proudly worked in their community for more than a decade through Evergreen's vocational programs, demonstrating how opportunity and support can transform lives.

For Sandra and Charles, Evergreen helped create something even more personal: connection. After years of loss and loneliness, Sandra met Charles on a blind date arranged through friends connected to Evergreen. Nearly 11 years later, their marriage is a reminder that everyone deserves companionship, belonging, and joy.

Regional Vice President, Linda Bailey, who has served Evergreen for 36 years, has witnessed countless stories like these unfold. "I have had the privilege of watching people move beyond highly regimented lives to embrace their individuality, discover their gifts, and fulfill their unique potential," she shared. "Through the generosity of our donors and communities, individuals



Jennifer and David



Sandra and Charles

are not only thriving, but also giving back in meaningful ways."

A ride to work. A safe place to call home. The confidence to find love, learn a new skill, or live more independently. Please consider making a gift today to support Evergreen Life Services and help create more of these everyday moments.

How We Provide

If you walked into one of Evergreen Life Services' homes on an ordinary afternoon, you might not immediately notice anything extraordinary. A television might be on in the background. Dinner might be starting to simmer. Someone might be folding laundry. Another person might be double-checking their schedule with quiet concentration.

At first glance, it looks like everyday life, and that's exactly the point.

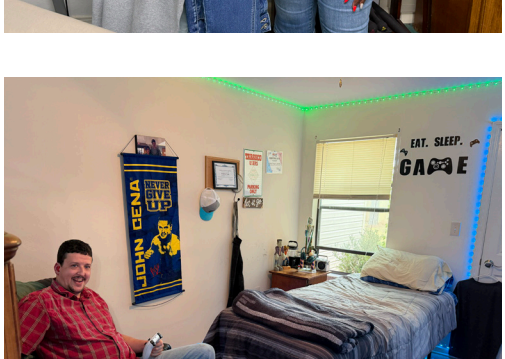
What you're really seeing is the building of independence, and standing right in the middle of it all is a Direct Support Professional (DSP).

If you're reading this, you've likely had someone in your life who showed up for you in a steady, dependable way. A DSP is that kind of presence. They're there in the morning when someone needs help building a routine, when a goal is finally achieved after weeks of practice, and in the car on the way to a job site or community event.

Most importantly, they're there in the hard moments too, when emotions run high, communication is difficult, and when safety, patience, and calm matter most.



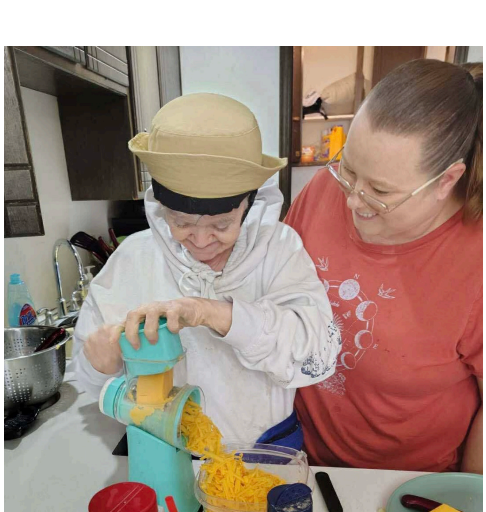


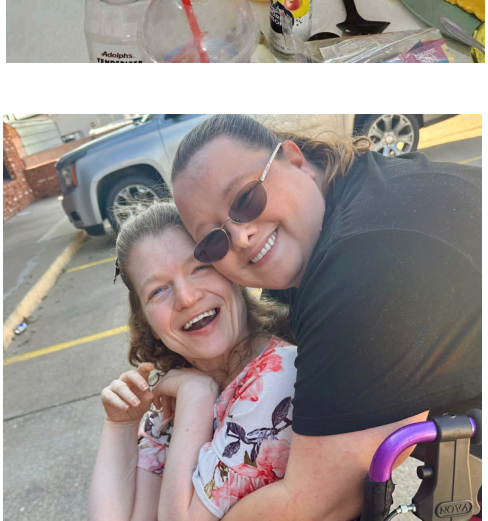


A DSP's job description reads like a long list of responsibilities: medication support, meal preparation, transportation, documentation, behavior support, home maintenance, and life skills training. If you ask anyone who's done the work, they'll tell you the truth is simpler and far more human.

It's about showing up, and in many ways, becoming family.

As Oak Grove Home Manager, Dea'nne Foster puts it, "The work of a DSP is essential to everyday functioning and lives of those we serve. Without the work they do the individuals we serve would face significant risks to their health and safety. DSP's matter because they become what so many don't have, family."





Remember that quiet afternoon at home, the TV in the background, the meal being prepared, the small steps toward independence? That moment exists only because someone chose to care. Someone like you.

Give today to support Evergreen Life Services and the people who make care feel like family.

How We Champion

The decisions made in legislative chambers and budget meetings don't stay there, they show up in our everyday lives. They determine whether an individual with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) can remain in their home, and whether a family can breathe a little easier knowing support will be there tomorrow.

As Doug Ryland, Regional Vice President, shared, "Advocacy is the active expression of our mission to serve, provide for, and champion individuals with disabilities."

Advocacy ensures that funding, policy, and protections reflect real needs, not just systems and budgets.

Federal and state decisions directly impact access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), the stability of the direct support workforce, and the quality of life for the individuals we support. When funding is strong, people experience continuity, independence, and dignity.



(left to right): Allen Nope, Exec. Dir. of Evergreen; Renee, TNCO representative; Adam Lowe, Tennessee State Senator; Rachel Starnes, Evergreen TN State Dir.; and Jarrod Adams, Evergreen Regional VP, East.



(back-middle): Rob Rains, Chief Advancement Officer for Evergreen, advocating for Medicaid funding with others at the U.S. Capitol building.

This is why Evergreen maintains an active advocacy presence, including engagement in Washington, D.C. Recently, leaders met with policymakers to advocate for stable Medicaid funding for HCBS and workforce development for direct support professionals.

Advocacy is strengthened through partnership. Families share lived experience, staff share daily realities, and together. These voices help shape better-informed decisions. When lawmakers hear these stories firsthand, they see beyond budgets to the people behind them.

Challenges remain, including workforce shortages, rising costs, and funding pressures, yet ongoing advocacy has helped secure protections and stability for community-based services.

This is what it means to champion those we serve. When you give today, you help protect vital services, strengthen advocacy efforts, and ensure that individuals with I/DD can experience a life where they are not defined by limitations, but by the choices they can make, the relationships they build, and the place they belong.

Our mission is to serve, provide for and champion individuals with disabilities.

A Word from Evergreen Board Member, Dr. JR Harding

Forty-three years is a long time to inhabit an unresponsive body—long enough to stop measuring life by steps taken and start measuring it by moments chosen, not by miles walked, but by the depth of one's engagement.

I have survived not one, but two separate spinalcord injuries, rendering me a "quadriplegic X2" (1983 and 1998). Each time, I lost more mobility. That reality often halts small talk or sparks a flood of questions. After the first injury, life split into a clear "before" and "after".

The second time taught a harsher lesson: loss can happen again. The five days I spent struggling with ICU psychosis were an unimaginable pit of hell, yet I survived. The abilities I had fought for the first time vanished. And yet I am here, still moving forward.

My life might seem limited to an outsider, but it has been shaped by a singular refusal: I will not sit on the sidelines of my own existence. Being moved around a room like a potted plant in a nursing home was never an option for me.

When circumstances narrow, there is a subtle temptation to become a mere observer—watching life pass by, choosing safety over involvement. But watching life is not the same as living it.

Each day, I ask myself a simple question: What is my reason for getting out of bed? It doesn't need to be a perfect or lifelong reason. It just needs to be strong enough to turn me from a spectator into a participant. When the body does not cooperate, purpose must.

I did not set out to build a resume; I aimed to continue. I sought to rebuild a life that no longer resembled the one I had planned, navigating systems and spaces never designed with me in mind.

Along the way, I had to challenge assumptions, both external and internal, that quietly suggested I had already peaked. I had not.

Over time, persistence evolved from mere survival into a form of engagement. I became an author, speaker, ADA consultant, and earned a doctorate—not because I had mastered adversity, but because I had lived through it.

I do more than share stories that inspire; I invite others in, challenging the idea that life should be watched from a distance.

This engagement has propelled me into the public sphere. I am honored to have served as a two-time U.S. Presidential Appointee (Bush 43') and a seven-time Gubernatorial Appointee (Chiles, Bush, Crist, and Scott). These roles aren't about titles. They are about being present.

They are about choosing to sit at tables where decisions influence access, equity, and opportunity, participating in the conversation rather than critiquing it from afar.

Engagement at that level demands more than presence — it means accepting responsibility when it is offered, and sometimes when it is not. It means leading. Leadership is often misunderstood as a position, but it is an activity: a daily choice to step forward, especially when it would be easier to step back.

Some leadership is visible, full of sweat and anxiety, involving tough conversations and the weight of knowing others are impacted by your choices. It demands energy, courage, and a refusal to quit.

Some leadership is quiet. It involves the discipline of reflection and the willingness to let your thoughts expand.

Turning the page to a new chapter requires listening deeply and growing without making an announcement. Both styles are essential. Both require intention.

Somewhere along the way, I found myself in a classroom, or perhaps the classroom found me. As a Senior Lecturer at a major public university, I work with students who are just beginning to shape their relationship with the world. Many have not yet been forced to ask if they will actively participate or just watch life unfold.

But they will. We all will, eventually.

In that space, I don't teach resilience as a theory. I practice it as a habit—not as something extraordinary, but as something repeatable and worthy. It is built through daily engagement: showing up, contributing, questioning, and continuing. Resilience doesn't emerge from a single moment of strength. It develops through the accumulation of everyday decisions to engage.

None of these roles fully defines my life. The truth is simpler: every day, I choose whether to participate in the life in front of me or let it pass by.

On some days, engagement feels effortless, the work meaningful, and the connections invigorating.

The path feels obvious. On other days, the body is louder, the memory of loss feels closer than the promise of the future, and participating feels heavier than watching from a distance.

On those days, the question returns: Can I find a reason to get out of bed?

Sometimes that reason is a responsibility—a class to teach or a commitment to uphold. Sometimes it is a connection—a student to encourage or a colleague to support.

Sometimes it is purpose—the quiet understanding that there is still meaningful work to do. And sometimes, it is simply a refusal to let life pass by without my involvement.

Over time, these reasons layer into something stronger than motivation; they become momentum.

They build a fully engaged life. If forty-three years have taught me anything, it is this: you don't need clarity about the whole journey to keep moving forward. You just need enough of a reason to stay engaged and a purpose to hold onto.



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The True Measure of Impact



Dr. Sue Buchholtz, CEO

Over the years, I have learned that the work we do is rarely about a single big moment. More often, it is about the small things that slowly build a good life. I think about individuals like Damon and his brave battle to beat cancer, Jennifer and David, who have proudly worked in their community for more than a decade, and Sandra and Charles, whose relationship grew from a simple introduction into a long marriage filledwith companionship and joy.

Dr. JR Harding writes that "watching life is not the same as living it," and that resilience is built through the everyday decision to engage, contribute, and continue. With the support of families, staff, donors, community partners, and advocates, nearly 1,000 individuals across seven states in our community homes, day centers, and various other programs are receiving person-centered care that empowers them to experience longer, happier, and healthier lives. Like Dr. Harding's reflection that "purpose must" move us forward when circumstances are difficult, we witness every day how encouragement and opportunity can create momentum.

True success is not defined by what we provide, but by the outcomes people experience because of it. At Evergreen, we are proud not only of the care and support we deliver, but of the lives that are stronger, fuller, healthier, and more connected as a result.

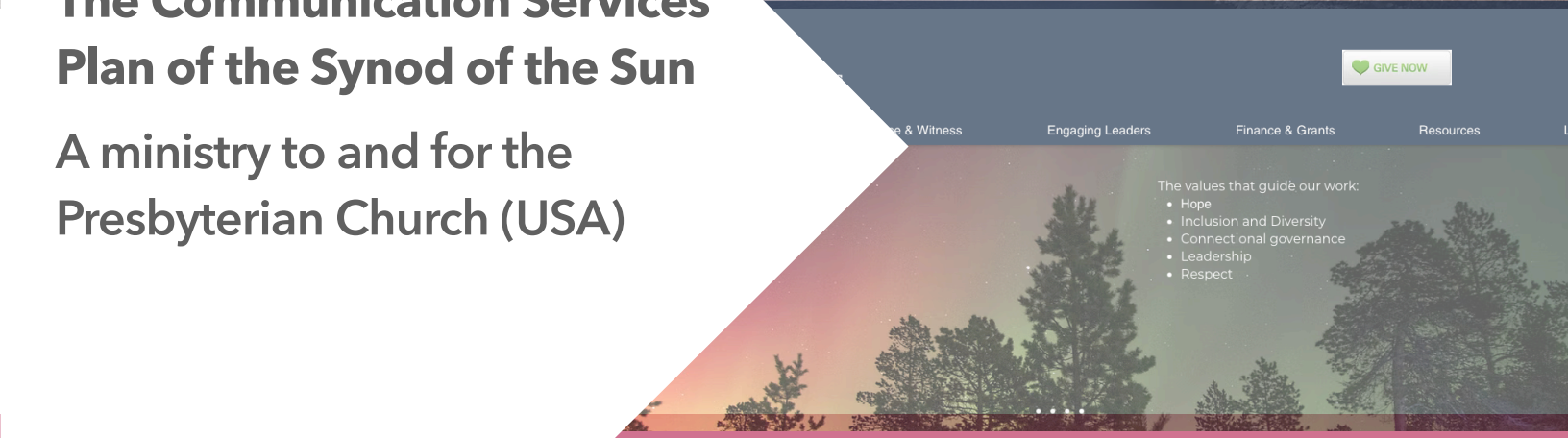
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Attachment N



The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

A ministry to and for the Presbyterian Church (USA)





The Communication Services Plan of the Synod of the Sun

A ministry to and for the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Synod of the Sun
Presbytery of Arkansas
Mission Presbytery
Pines Presbytery
Presbytery of South Louisiana
Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery
Indian Nations Presbytery
New Covenant Presbytery

Presbyteries
Twin Cities Presbytery
Snake River Presbytery
Presbytery of Northern Kansas
Presbytery of Southern Kansas
Missouri Union Presbytery
Grand Canyon Presbytery
de Cristo Presbytery
Mountain Laurel Presbytery
Presbytery of Coastal Carolina
Central Florida Presbytery
Presbytery of Peaks and Plains
Presbytery of Wabash Valley
Presbytery of South Alabama
St. Augustine Presbytery
Presbytery of Florida (soon-to-be Presbytery of Northwest Florida)

Synods
Synod of the Covenant
Synod of South Atlantic
Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Synod of the Southwest

Presbyterian Programs
Assoc. of Mid Council Leaders
Presbyterian Leadership Formation Program
Coastal Carolina Presbyterian Women

Notes:

We have 30 partners from four time zones.

We generate between 8 and 12 newsletters or flyers per week.

We generate an average of 100 social media posts per week.

Attachment O

Synod Leader and Stated Clerk Report: Fall 2026 Synod Assembly

First, you need to know I still have my original Maryland cell phone number. So if you get a phone call from a Maryland number, it might be me.

The **Annual Leadership Retreat will be held again at MO on January 4-6, 2027**. This will give us the opportunity to evaluate our 2026 work and reset our priorities for 2027. Synod Staff, committee leadership, and others will gather to prepare our synod work for 2027. Those who are invited, it is important that you plan to be there.

As intended, barring any major events I will be present for at least one meeting in every presbytery, and in some cases,, more than one. Scheduling being the most difficult issue to overcome.

I have continued to work on building the Synod's relationship with our Covenant Partners. This year we celebrate new partnerships with Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies and Camp Gilmont, and conversations have begun with Project Vida in El Paso. I have attended and participated in events with partners such as Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, Pan American School, Austin Seminary, Schriener University, and have been invited to the Inauguration of the new President of Austin College.

Additionally I was able to attend and participate in the Annual Gathering of the Hispanic Mission and Ministry Network (HMMN), Synod Youth Workshop, Flourishing in the Spirit Retreat, and the Arkansas Youth Quake, and the Ordination of our Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR) Director – Libby Janes.

2026 saw the meeting of the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Milwaukee, WI. While there, I was able to host a dinner on the Synod's behalf inviting all the Synod of the Sun commissioners, advisory delegates, presbytery staff, observers, and PCUSA staff from the SOTS, and a few quests. It seemed a welcome respite and fellowship opportunity for our folks in attendance. On their behalf, I thank you for the opportunity.

We are experiencing a time of turnover in 2026 among our presbytery leaders. We have welcomed new leaders Leigh Rachel and Jeff Sims (Co-leaders in South Louisiana) and Laurel Cockrill (Interim Presbytery Pastor in Indian Nations). New clerks Katrina Richardson (Cimarron) and Wally Johnson (Eastern Oklahoma). I trust you will join me in prayers of thanksgiving, guidance, wisdom and strength for these saints who have heard the call to leadership and stepped forward to serve the church.

Sadly, we say goodbye this year to Lynn Hardgrove (New Covenant), Scott Campbell (Palo Duro), Laurie Palmer (Mission), Leigh McCaslin (Eastern Oklahoma), Richard Williams (South Louisiana), and Sharon Fortin (South Louisiana). I am truly thankful for their service to the church and their gifts of kindness and guidance to me in my first two years in this position.

Truly, these saints deserve their recognition and a time of rest. We will certainly be diminished as a synod by their absence, and yet we wish them more than well as they enter new chapters in their ministries.

To that end, please bear in mind and prayer that Arkansas, Palo Duro, and New Covenant are or will be soon in active searches for new presbytery leaders, and new clerks will be learning. Please keep all these in your prayers, and be mindful of possible candidates.

Some of the Synod Leader's Activities since the last assembly:

- Attended presbytery meetings for Arkansas, Grace, Cimarron, Eastern Oklahoma, Indian Nations, Mission, New Covenant, Palo Duro, Pines, Southern Louisiana, and Tres Rios.
- Attended the online EP Forum gatherings and the EP Forum Gathering in Shreveport.
- Attended Synod Executive gathering in Louisville.
- Participated in Synod Clerks Gathering in Irving. Our minutes were read with only a few exceptions.
- Attended HMMN Gathering in Austin
- Hosted a dinner for Synod Commissioners and Friends at General Assembly in Milwaukee, WI.
- Participated in Synod Youth Workshop.
- There are two types of Pennsylvania Dutch, Plain Dutch and _____Dutch. The first few people to answer this question correctly will get a prize.
- Met with representatives of six of our Covenant Partners.
- Led worship for Arkansas Youth Quake.
- Staffed the Faithful Preaching Project retreat at Mo Ranch.
- Attended Mid-Council Leader Gathering in Louisville.
- Represented the synod and participated in six Covenant Partner events.
- Preached in 10 churches and Participated 3 Special Church Events.
- Represented the Synod of the Sun in searches for 4 new EPs.
- Driven roughly 15,590 miles and flew roughly 3,944 miles.

Upcoming Dates:

November	10	South Lou Presby Mtg, (New Orleans)
	13	Austin College Presidential Graduation
	13-14	Oklahoma Tri-Presbytery Meeting (Sequoia Lodge, Hulbert, OK)
	21	New Covenant Presbytery Meeting
	30- Dec. 2	Ep Forum Gathering (Houston)
December	3	Grace Presby Zoom
January	4-6	Synod Leadership Retreat (Mo Ranch, TX)
	21-24	APCE (Pittsburgh, PA)

February 21-24 Synod Assembly (Irving)

2026 has been a busy and exciting year. I maintain my stated goals be present for at least one meeting in each presbytery (preferably more), continue to preach when invited, and strengthen our covenant partnerships.

As always, I welcome your questions, suggestions, input, encouragement, and prayers.

Your Servant in Christ,

Mitch Miller

Attachment P

Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery (SPDR)
February to October 2026 Report to the Synod Assembly at Ferncliff
Prepared by Libby Janes, SPDR Director, on October 15, 2026

February to October 2026 Disaster Grants & Events Updates:

Over $242,000 grant funds and disaster assistance have been distributed in the Synod of the Sun with support of the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery in the past 9 months, not including church-to-church direct donations.

- **$7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Presbytery of the Pines**
  Awarded on February 4, 2026
- **$7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Grace Presbytery**
  Awarded on February 6, 2026
  Grant requested, following a severe winter storm that impacted East Texas and Northern Louisiana with hazardous icy road conditions, widespread power outages, extreme temperatures, and debris from January 25th-February 6th, 2026.

- **$7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery**
  Awarded on March 9, 2026
  Grant requested, following seven confirmed tornadoes on March 5th and nine tornadoes on March 6th, including an EF-3 tornado in Beggs, OK. Trinity Church in Bixby, OK also hosted a spaghetti dinner to support recovery.

- **$30,000 PDA Migration Accompaniment Ministries Grant - Mission Presbytery**
  Awarded on April 7, 2026
  Grant requested to support three overstretched Presbyterian migrant ministries in San Antonio and Hidalgo (Puentes de Cristo, Nuevos Vecinos, and Interfaith Welcome Coalition). This grant supported 2,000 people with food boxes, 300 colonia residents with food/clothing/medical support.

- **$7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Grace Presbytery**
  Awarded on May 12, 2026
  Grant requested to support the West Region of Grace Presbytery, particularly Mineral Wells, for tornado recovery, following the April 28, 2026 EF3 tornado.

- **$50,000 PDA National Recovery Grant – Mission Presbytery**
  Partnership of Mo-Ranch and Hunt Preservation Society
  Awarded on June 25, 2026
  Grant requested to support a place-based recovery initiative led by the Hunt Preservation Society (HPS), in close partnership with Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly, to facilitate the recovery of residents who sustained flood-related housing damage from last year's flooding event and whose recovery needs remain unmet by other available funding. PDA funds will support home repair and materials for 8–12 residential properties, with priority given to seniors, veterans, and disabled homeowners, as well as support lodging and meal costs at Mo-Ranch for incoming volunteer work crews, enabling continued volunteer-driven labor to support the community.

- **$5,000 awarded by the Synod of the Sun – Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery**
  Awarded on May 18, 2026
- **$5,000 matched by PDA National Recovery Grant – Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery**
  Awarded on June 4, 2026
  A $40,000 Long-Term Recovery PDA Grant had supported Commissioned Pastor Kristy Rodgers & Rev. Josh Kerr to represent PC(USA)/PDA on Osage County & Claremore, OK's Long-Term Recovery Groups following tornadoes. Assistance was provided alongside ecumenical partners/non-profit groups. They served faithfully, and all unmet needs statewide from those disasters have now consolidated into one Oklahoma Unmet Needs table.

  Catholic Charities then called upon SPDR to request any resources possible, as only 4 charitable programs remain with funding options, and the need of 6 remaining vulnerable families values $44,000. PC(USA)'s presence on this table is critical both for supporting demonstrated humanitarian relief needs and developing PC(USA)'s collegial relationships in OK disaster recovery partnerships as the OK DRT begins to emerge. SPDR requested support from Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, the Synod of the Sun, and PDA to join this unmet needs table to help meet the remaining needs from the 2024 Oklahoma tornadoes' disaster. $10,000 funding for the Unmet Needs Table was made possible by a $5,000 grant by the Synod of the Sun and a matching $5,000 grant by PDA.

- **$1000 scholarship by the Synod of the Sun –Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery**
  For "ITEM-C" Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Conference
  Awarded on June 25, 2026.
  Grant requested to assist RE Fred Bray from FPC Broken Bow to attend the ITEM-C conference, to connect SE Oklahoma and tribally affiliated churches with statewide and tribal emergency management resources and training, in advance of the SE Oklahoma

Church Disaster Plan Workshop, to be hosted by FPC Broken Bow on September 19, 2026.

- **$95,000 National Recovery Grant – Tres Rios Presbytery**
  Awarded on August 31, 2026
  Grant requested as a partnership of PDA, SPDR, Tres Rios Presbytery, and the Concho Valley COAD to support the building of a Mennonite-constructed "tiny house" which will serve as transitional housing for many families in process with the Concho Valley Long-Term Recovery Group for their homes to be rebuilt, in the aftermath of the 2025 floods.

- **$7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Mission Presbytery**
  Awarded on July 21, 2026
  Grant requested to provide relief to several families and Presbyterian pastors of FPC Uvalde and FPC Kerrville, who were impacted in the 2026 South Texas Floods
  $7,500 PDA Initial Assistance Grant – Tres Rios Presbytery
  Awarded on July 24, 2026
  Grant requested to provide temporary shelter for 20 flood survivors of the 2026 South Texas Floods in Sonora, TX, while their homes were being mucked out and rebuilt.

- **$1,000 Private Donation through SPDR, given to Mission Presbytery for Flood Recovery**
  Awarded on July 30, 2026 (Synod transfer still pending as of October 12)
  Given to Mission Presbytery's Disaster Response Team to support flood recovery efforts. Funds supported funding by Mission Presbytery's Disaster Response Team to a local Kerrville, TX initiative by All Hands & All Hearts, to provide mold recovery training and supplies.

- **$5,000 PDA Church Repair Grant to FPC Kerrville – Mission Presbytery**
  Awarded on September 2, 2026
- **$5,000 from Synod of the Sun's David Robinson Fund – FPC Kerrville**
  Awarded September 2026 (Synod payment disbursement still pending as of October 12)
  Grants requested to assist FPC Kerrville, which reported $95,000 of damage to their church building due to the July 2026 floods.

- **Mo-Ranch** is in the process of becoming an official **PDA Host Site** for 2025 and 2026 Flood Recovery. PDA deployed 3 National Response Team members to Mo-Ranch on August 26-28th to conduct an evaluation for Mo-Ranch to become an official PDA volunteer site. Lisa Winters is Mo-Ranch's volunteer coordinator. Volunteers house at Mo-Ranch at discounted rates and deploy out to local volunteer opportunities in Kerr

County through Global Empowerment Mission coordinator, Stephanie Hodges.

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance deployed** two PDA National Response Team members to **Tres Rios Presbytery** support San Saba's Long Term Recovery Group with a **spiritual and emotional care** program.

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** have been invited into **Mission Presbytery** for two Zoom webinars and one in-person **deployment** for **emotional-spiritual recovery** support.

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** has been invited to host four 50-person Church Safety & Security programs for Mission Presbytery churches in early 2027.

- **Communication & Collaboration:** SPDR has been in contact with Presbyterian Churches in Uvalde, Boerne, Pipe Creek, Cotulla, Junction, and Del Rio. SPDR has been **encouraging funding support to be given directly to churches** impacted by the 2026 South Texas Floods. Donations may be sent directly to FPC Uvalde and FPC Kerrville.

Recent Disaster Response:

- **Ross Fire:** Communicated VAL updates & checked in with Grace Presbytery RMA/Sharon Curry and FPC Hamilton RE/David Gonzales. Referred a Palo Duro Presbytery congregation to donate to Palo Pinto County United Way & Fire Department. No needs reported from Presbyterian churches.

- **Tropical Storm Edouard:** Communicated VAL, TDEM, & NWS updates with leaders & disaster teams of 6 Presbyteries (NC, PSL, Mission, Grace, Pines, & TR) & called local churches in the Presbytery of New Covenant to check on them. Minimal damage reported, and no present needs.

- **August 28, 2026 Storm in San Antonio**: This unexpected storm caused widespread power outages and debris. University Presbyterian Church's playground was damaged. SPDR has been in close communication with Mission Presbytery leadership and disaster team to request assistance for UPC's playground repairs.

- **Presbyterian Night Shelter:** 3-4 storage buildings destroyed in a fire. Assessment is ongoing; and an Amazon wish list has been activated. Grace Presbytery will notify SPDR what additional assistance is needed.

- **July 2026 Floods:** SPDR continues to check in with impacted churches. SPDR & Mission Presbyter & Stated Clerk will visit FPC Uvalde on Sept. 13 to help them organize relief & recovery needs.
  Synod Blog: How Your Church Can Support South Texas Flood Recovery
  https://www.synodsun.org/post/how-your-church-can-support-south-texas-flood-recovery

Other Emerging Partnerships:

- SPDR met with **American Red Cross** leaders at the **Volunteer Louisiana Disaster Summit in Baton Rouge**. They have ready-to-go warming center/shelter resources and we are exploring possible partnerships to develop interested rural churches.

- SPDR has learned about the vast training, knowledge, and immediate disaster relief programs offered by **Emergency Managers**. **SPDR has been encouraging churches to connect with their City or County/Parish Emergency Management** offices for immediate updates during disasters, knowledge of emerging resources, free training opportunities, and preparedness tips for local hazards.

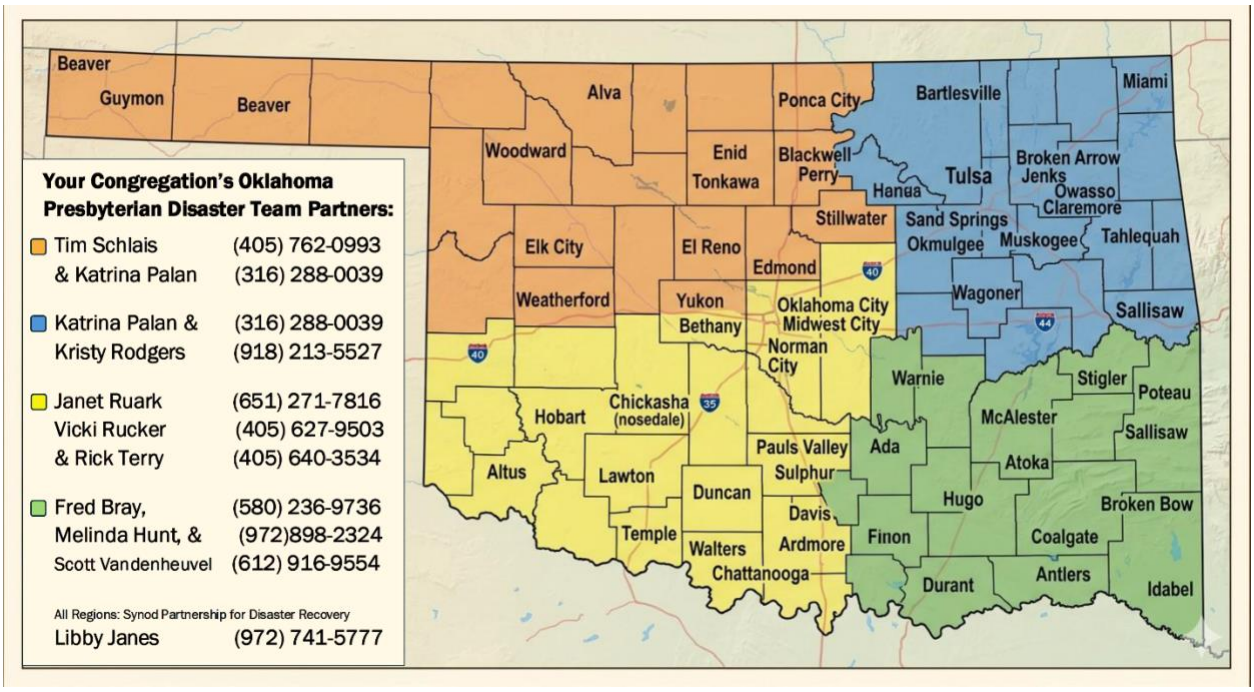
- **Supporting Grieving Communities**, or **Commemorating a Disaster's Anniversary:** SPDR has been resourcing congregations in spiritual recovery following disasters, as they gather for worship following disasters. Collaboration with the Presbyterian pastor-led non-profit, **Faith & Grief**, is also being explored.

SPDR's Goal for 2026 was to visit & collaborate to develop presbytery disaster teams in all 11 presbyteries. Here's where we're at with that goal.

Presbytery Disaster Response Team (DRT) Updates:

Oklahoma Presbyteries' DRT:

- Idea was presented at the February Tri-Presbytery meeting. 17 people signed up that day, expressing interest!
- The group has met monthly on Zoom since then, developing an infrastructure.
- The state was divided into four sub-regions, with two DRT members supporting each region. The intention is to build connectivity within sub-regions to communicate disaster updates, share resources, and plan regional initiatives.



- A statewide initiative "The Golden Bucket Challenge" was introduced at the August OK Presbyteries' meeting, and will conclude at the November meeting. Churches are encouraged to build, store, and report Clean-Up Buckets, to be kept at their church and deployed locally if a disaster occurs, requiring this resource.



- An Adaptable Church Disaster Plan was developed from a great example at FPC Copperas Cove in Mission Presbytery, and made into an adaptable version that was taught at the SE OK Church Disaster Plan Workshop at FPC Broken Bow. About 15 people attended this workshop, and especially present were many tribally-affiliated faith leaders of very small congregations from this region.



- RE Fred Bray, in anticipation of the SE OK Church Disaster Preparedness Workshop, received a scholarship from the Synod of the Sun to attend the ITEM-C Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Conference in Tulsa, OK. This conference was recommended to SPDR by an OK VOAD colleague from Catholic Charities. RE Fred Bray attended this conference, submitted a thorough report from his experience, and he networked with a variety of statewide and tribal emergency management program leaders. Fred invited some of these leaders from the conference to join and present at the upcoming workshop at FPC Broken Bow, and they added further wisdom and expertise to this event.

- Two Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery pastors, CP Kristy Rodgers and TE Josh Kerr, represented the Presbyterian Church (USA) on two Long-Term Recovery Groups for the Bartlesville, OK and Claremore, OK tornado recovery programs. They dispensed a total of $50,000 of assistance to several cases presented by case managers to the Unmet Needs Table. After the initial $40,000 from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance ran out, SPDR assisted in requesting $5,000 from the Synod of the Sun and $5,000 more in matching funds from PDA.

Grace Presbytery DRT:

- Excellent examples from the January-February 2026 Winter Storms were lifted up, from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Longview and Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church in Richardson, TX.

- The Grace DRT provides CPR/AED/First Aid and ALICE Active Shooter trainings for Church Safety & Security. A mini-training of ALICE was provided to the Synod Gathering in Irving in February. These trainings are available synod-wide, on request with the receiving presbytery/congregation responsible only for trainer travel costs.

- Grace DRT and SPDR were active in responding to needs following the April 28, 2026 Mineral Wells tornado. The communication needs that followed inspired the development of a new inter-organizational communication plan and a synod-wide local bucket supplies presbytery preparedness initiative.
- RE John Kusewitt of FPC Garland received a scholarship from Grace Presbytery DRT to attend the June 2026 Natural Hazards Workshop with SPDR Director in Denver, CO.

- Grace Presbytery continues planning their presbytery bucket initiative plan, with Easter 2027 as a goal implementation date.

Presbytery of New Covenant DRT:

- This group is growing and recruiting! Ongoing goals include development of new sub-regions to foster local relationships and disaster update communication.

- A Presbytery-wide mission project for buckets is planned for their November meeting. Offering funds received from the July meeting will support bucket assembly.

- Support and updates were provided to presbytery and DRT leaders during Tropical Storm Arthur, and no needs were reported by churches.

- The DRT is encouraging churches in this region to plan service trips to Mo-Ranch for Kerr County flood relief clean-up efforts.

Mission Presbytery:

- Building the Mission Presbytery Disaster Response Team by adding members and strengthening communication and system integration
- Planning Church Safety & Security Trainings with PDA
- Assisting churches with reviewing their church safety plans.
- Bucket re-distribution coordination, to ensure presbyteries and ministries in remote areas have access

- Shelter capacity: Meeting with Corpus Christi about sheltering supplies and capacity, in case of a major disaster
- Preaching (Central Austin) & Minute-for-Mission (Westlake Hills, Hope)
- Flood Recovery:
    - Communicating that donations can be sent to Mission Presbytery for FPC Uvalde, or to FPC Kerrville for flood relief needs.
    - Development of Mo-Ranch as a PDA Host Site. They also continue to host First Responder Respite Retreats with the Presbyterian-led program, Faith & Grief.
    - Establishing a Long-Term Recovery Group presence in Junction, TX
    - Helping FPC Kerrville transition case management program from an independent to community integrated program

Tres Rios Presbytery:

- $95,000 grant received from PDA to build transitional housing in San Angelo for families awaiting home repairs from the 2025 floods.
- Preparing for Jan. 9-10 Youth Mission Retreat & mission project. The presbytery's goal is to convert an unused facility into a resource storing location.
- Developing a Presbytery Disaster sub-committee with Mike Burnett. Mike & SPDR will present at the October presbytery meeting an update on Concho Valley updates & the need to gather a disaster team.
- First disaster team meeting is tentatively October 22nd at 1pm.

Palo Duro Presbytery:

- Collaborating with Joe Gambill to build capacities around the synod for churches to apply to FEMA Church Repair grants. Joe is an experienced grant writer and glad to be a resource.
- SPDR provided support and check-ins during the Canyon May 15-18th wildfires. No needs reported from local churches or presbytery.
- Presenting at the Sept 25th Presbytery meeting about SPDR & recruiting a disaster team. Response from presbytery leaders was poor, so SPDR will re-attempt disaster team efforts in 2027.

Presbytery of Arkansas:

- AR DRT visited OK DRT on Aug 25th Zoom meeting and shared their wisdom about developing communication & relationships with churches in sub-areas.
- AR DRT leaders presented at their Oct 2-3rd meeting to encourage new members to sign up, following the death of one member this spring and anticipated retirement of two members.
- **Polly Williams attended Arkansas Presbyterian Women's conference** in Hot Springs on behalf of SPDR on April 17-19.

Pines Presbytery:

- Recruited for a new disaster team at the Oct 10th Meeting, will continue engaging.
- Exploring inter-synod opportunities for evacuation partners, in case of a major disaster.

Presbytery of South Louisiana:

- Recruiting for a new disaster team at the Nov. 9-10th Meeting
- Leading a 3H Disaster Preparedness/Church Safety Plan workshop on Nov. 9th to begin the presbytery gathering.
- Exploring inter-synod opportunities for evacuation partners, in case of a major disaster
- Interviewing pastors & local leaders who were active in the 2020-2021 hurricane response, to request advice for responding to future events.
- Contacted all 9 churches listed on the PSL website with "Hurricane Box" supplies, distributed by PSL in 2021, to ensure contents are updated and replenished as needed.

SPDR Web Blog Publications (https://www.synodsun.org/blog-1/categories/spdr):

- "How Your Church Members Can Engage Local Resources for Disaster Preparedness"
- "Presbytery Disaster Response Team Updates"
- "Adaptable Disaster Plan Now Available!"
- "Clean-Up Bucket Initiatives in the Synod of the Sun"
- "Kaboom! Continued Help Needed In Kerrville"
- "How Your Church Can Support South Texas Flood Recovery"
- "Worship Resources for Disaster Recovery"
- "Prepare – Respond – Recovery: Tornado Edition"
- "Reflections from the Volunteer Louisiana Disaster Summit in Baton Rouge, LA"
- "Prayer for Disaster Recovery"
- "A Warm Welcome: How Churches are Serving as Warming Centers"
- "Hospitality in the Presbytery of South Louisiana"
- "SPDR Update – Winter Storm"
- "SPDR Web – 2026 Church Disaster Preparedness Calendar"
- "Mount Comfort Presbyterian Church's Community Garden"

February to October SPDR Trainings & Events:

- Wednesdays at 9am: Weekly Oklahoma Bible Study
- Feb. 16: "Church Safety Planning" presentation with RE Jeff Hampton from FPC Copperas Cove, for Grace Presbytery Small Churches' Zoom Gathering

- Feb. 20-21: Tri-Presbytery mtg.– 1HR presentation & recruitment of the new Oklahoma Presbyteries' Disaster Team, Stillwater, OK
- Feb. 22-24: Synod Gathering; collaboration with Grace DRT for "ALICE: What's it about?" mini training, Installation as SPDR Director, & SPDR presentation, Irving TX
- Feb. 26: SPDR talk at Grace Presbytery Meeting in Flower Mound, TX
- March 6-7: Mission Presbytery mtg, COM questioning, SPDR presentation, Cuero, TX
- March 9-10: 2026 Disaster Summit hosted by Lt. Governor of LA, Baton Rouge, LA,
- March 13-14: Arkansas Presbytery Meeting at University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, AR
- March 18: Lead Oklahoma Presbytery Bible Study
- March 20-22: Served as Keynote Leader & lead a Grief Workshop "Lifting Up Loss" at the new Mo-Ranch Young Adult Retreat
- March 23: Guest-lectured about church disaster preparation and recovery ministries for Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary's class "They Didn't Teach Me That In Seminary," taught by Rev. Ted Foote and Dr. Carolyn Helsel
- March 24-April 28 (weekly gathering): Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care Academy
- March 24-April 28 (weekly gathering): Volunteer Louisiana's 6-week Virtual Volunteer Engagement Series
- March 30: "Leadership Lessons to Lighten the Load" Hummingly presentation in Kerrville & visit to FPC Kerrville's Unmet Needs Fund meeting
- April 12-16: PDA Annual Conference at Zephyr Point, Lake Tahoe, NV. Learned about PDA initiatives & trainings in Emotional/Spiritual Care, Long-Term Recovery, Preparedness, and built relationships with PDA programs and National Response Team members.
- April 17-18: Polly Williams/Synod CT attended Arkansas Presbyterian Women's Conference in Hot Springs, AR on behalf of SPDR
- April 20: Board of Pensions "Women and Money" webinar
- May 1-2: Tri-Presbytery Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK
- May 4-7: National Voluntary Orgs. Active in Disasters (VOAD) Conference, Reno, NV
- May 9, 1pm: Service of Ordination at Mo-Ranch
- May 12: Disaster Preparedness Training with Westlake Hills PC, Austin, TX
- May 24: Preached & led Minute-for-Mission for Covenant PC in San Antonio, TX
- May 26-29: Attended and volunteered at the Texas Department of Emergency Management Conference (TDEM), Fort Worth, TX. SPDR gained understanding of city/state emergency management programs, public resources, and urgent emotional-spiritual care needs among first responders.
- June 2: Oklahoma Presbyteries' Disaster Response Team meeting
- June 2: Oklahoma state unmet needs meeting, & Concho Valley LTRG meeting
- June 6: Grace Presbytery Meeting at Central Presbyterian Church in Woodway, TX
- June 8-10: Synod Staff Gathering in Irving, TX

- June 8: SPDR Liaisons mtg
- June 9: Grace Disaster Recovery Team mtg
- June 9: Meeting with Fran Shelton/Faith & Grief
- June 10 & 16: PDA Emotional-Spiritual Care Webinar for Mission Presbytery. Important insights on disaster practical and emotional/spiritual experiences, and peer support were made possible. SPDR followed up with St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Austin to offer additional listening, resources, and support.
- June 14-19: Natural Hazards Workshop in Denver, CO
- June 15: Meeting with Pastor Babs from St. Andrew Presbyterian Church of Austin
- June 16: Meeting with Presbytery of South Louisiana leader/Pastor Leigh Rachal
- June 30-July 2: Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Conference in Tulsa, attended by Fred Bray with support by SPDR and the Synod of the Sun
- July 4: Helped lead a disaster anniversary commemorative prayer walk with FPC Kerrville
- July 5-9: Led small groups at Junior High Jubilee at Mo-Ranch
- July 13: SPDR Liaisons Mtg
- July 14: New Covenant Presbytery Disaster Team Meeting
- July 15-17: Synod Youth Workshop, visiting for SPDR presentation & Service Project Day, Tulsa OK
- July 18: New Covenant Presbytery Meeting (Zoom) – SPDR Presentation & fundraising for presbytery-wide disaster buckets initiative
- July 19: Preached at Grace Presbyterian Church, Temple, TX
- July 21: Oklahoma Presbyteries' Disaster Team mtg
- July 22: Texas VOAD mtg
- July 23: PDA/SPDR/Mo-Ranch mtg for South Texas Flood Recovery
- July 28: Arkansas Disaster Team mtg
- July 30-August 1: OK Presbyteries' Meeting in Guthrie, OK. SPDR Presentation, introduction of the 'Golden Bucket' challenge, & visited OKC Bombing Memorial.
- August 4: Grace Presbytery DRT mtg
- August 9: Minute-for-Mission at Westlake PC, Austin TX
- August 10: SPDR Leadership mtg
- August 10: SPDR Liaisons mtg
- August 10: Mission Presbytery DRT mtg
- August 11: Presbytery of South Louisiana Zoom meeting
- August 11: Tres Rios Presbytery DRT Meeting
- August 14: CPR/AED/First Aid Certification Class, Austin, TX
- August 16: Hope Presbyterian Church Disaster Plan Presentation
- August 18: Presbytery of New Covenant Disaster Team meeting
- August 18: Natural Hazards Center Thompson Flood Disaster Anniversary Webinar

- August 21-23: Became CERT (Community Emergency Response Training) Certified by the City of Austin Department of Emergency Management. Training included disaster preparedness, Stop-the-Bleed certification, Narcan training, medical operations competency, fire safety training, terrorism response, Search & Rescue operations, disaster psychology, and shelter training.
- August 25: Oklahoma Presbyteries' DRT mtg
- August 26-29: Mo Ranch Bridge To Ministry Cohort Retreat & PDA Site Visit
- August 20: Rev. Colton Hedrick's Ordination Service at Grace Presbyterian Church of Temple, TX – served on commission
- September 6: Preached at Central Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX
- September 8: Natural Hazards Center 9/11 Disaster Anniversary Webinar
- September 8: Grace Presbytery Disaster Team mtg
- September 10: Oklahoma VOAD mtg
- September 13: Visit to FPC Uvalde with Mission Presbytery leaders, for disaster recovery & support following 2022 elementary school shooting and July 2026 floods
- September 14: SPDR Liaisons mtg
- September 14: SPDR Leadership mtg
- September 14: Mission Presbytery Disaster Team mtg
- September 16-17: Mission Presbytery New Ministries Task Force Retreat
- September 18-19: SE OK Church Disaster Plan Workshop at FPC Broken Bow; 4.5H of training hours for small church and several tribally affiliated leaders
- September 20: Preached & co-presided at FPC Broken Bow, OK
- September 25-26: Palo Duro Presbytery Meeting in Plainview, TX, SPDR Presentation
- September 27: Preached at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Lubbock, TX
- October 5-7: Synod Commissioned Pastors and Small Church Leaders' Retreat at Camp Gilmont – lead Church Disaster Plan workshops (1.5H x2)
- October 8-9: Tres Rios Presbytery Meeting in San Angelo, TX; preached and presided, and gave SPDR presentation
- October 10: Pines Presbytery Meeting in Shreveport; presided & gave SPDR presentation
- October 12: SPDR Liaisons mtg
- October 12: Mission Presbytery Disaster Team mtg
- October 16-17: Mission Presbytery Meeting in San Antonio, TX; SPDR presentation & PDA
- October 23: Arkansas VOAD Meeting
- October 25-29: Synod Gathering at Ferncliff, AR

Upcoming SPDR Training & Events:

- November 4: OK VOAD Emotional-Spiritual Care Committee mtg
- November 9: SPDR Church Safety Plan Workshop in New Orleans, LA
- November 10: Presbytery of South Louisiana Meeting in New Orleans, LA – presenting about SPDR and recruiting for a new PSL disaster team
- November 12: Oklahoma VOAD Meeting
- November 12-14: Oklahoma Tri-Presbytery Meeting at Sequoyah Lodge
- November 14: Synod Youth Workshop Planning Meeting, Irving, TX
- November 16: SPDR Liaisons Meeting
- November 18: TX VOAD Meeting
- November 19: Tres Rios Presbytery Planning Meeting in Big Spring, TX for January Youth Mission Event
- November 20-21: Presbytery of New Covenant Meeting in Houston, TX & clean-up bucket presbytery mission project
- December 2: Texas VOAD Meeting in Austin
- December 3: Grace Presbytery Meeting on Zoom
- December 7: SPDR Liaisons Meeting
- December 8-10: PCHAS Christmas Kids Outreach Event
- December 15: Mission Presbytery New Ministries Task Force mtg
- Starting January, I'll serve on Mission Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry
- January 3-6: Synod Leadership Gathering at Mo-Ranch
- January 8-10: Tres Rios Youth Mission Retreat
- January 22: AR VOAD mtg
- January 23: CrossRoads Presbyterian Church hosting PDA Church Safety & Security Training, San Antonio, TX
- January 25-27: Austin Seminary Midwinter Lectures
- January 29-31: SHYC at Austin College
- February 5-6: Oklahoma Presbyteries' Meeting
- February 20: St. Andrews PC hosting PDA Church Safety & Security Training, San Antonio, TX
- February 21-24: Synod Gathering in Irving, TX
- March 11-12: Tres Rios Presbytery Meeting in El Paso, TX
- March 17-19: St. Matthew Presbyterian Church Revival, Broken Bow, OK
- March 13: Synod Youth Workshop Planning Meeting, Irving, TX
- April 10: Parkway PC hosting PDA Church Safety & Security Training, Corpus Christi, TX
- April 18-24: PDA National Conference in Gulfport, MS

- April 23: AR VOAD Mtg
- May 3-6: National VOAD Conference in Daytona Beach, FL
- June 1-4: Texas Department of Emergency Management Conference in Fort Worth, TX
- June 4-5: Oklahoma Presbyteries' Meeting
- July 9-17: Synod Youth Workshop (I will be keynoting!)
- September 13-17: Commissioned Pastors & Small Church Leaders' Retreat
- October 15-16: Mission Presbytery Mtg, John Knox Ranch
- October 24-27: Synod Gathering, location TBA
- November 5-6: Oklahoma Presbyteries' Meeting

Other Ministry Updates:

- Rev. Libby Janes was installed as SPDR director on February 23rd at the Synod gathering, passed questioning by Mission Presbytery's Committee on Ministry on March 6, and was ordained at Mo-Ranch on Saturday May 9th at Mo-Ranch.
- Rev. Libby Janes is serving on Mission Presbytery's New Ministries Task Force, and will serve on Mission Presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry, beginning in 2027.
- Rev. Libby Janes will be the Keynoter for SYW 2027!

Attachment Q

Synod of the Sun

Equipping Committee Report 10/26/26

26 October 2026

MEMBERS

Maggie Alsup, ,Laurie Barker, Jim Barker, Tim Blodgett, Fred Bray, Martha Bumpas, Molly Casteel, Loretta Credo, Chris Lee, Danita Nelson, Kristy Rodgers, Sandra Watson

PARTNERS: Thomas Riggs, Mitch Miller

ACTIONS

- **Goals/Objectives for Synod Priorities**
- **CP and Small Church Retreat Report** - Kristy led content at the Oct 5-7 event
- **Trained Elder Listening Sessions –** lessons learned
- **Survey rubric** - tabled
- **EC Budget** 2027 Changes
- **CSP** updates

NOTES

1. **Meetings** in 2026 are held on the **second Tuesday** of the month at **4:00 pm Central** via Zoom.
2. Equipping is blessed to have 12 members and we are excited to regularly have the majority present in our meetings. That was a challenge in the past and we are finding the work easier with more hands. The team is great – and it is easy to gather them and do the work. Thank you!!! We had 2 members take their sabbaticals this year and our primary staff connection also went on sabbatical – and we continued getting our work done.
3. **Goals/Objectives** adopted to align with Synod 2026 Priorities
    a. Supporting **Commissioners** for resourcing and greater participation – The EC will produce support materials for Synod Commissioners before the next Assembly meeting (adjusted to Spring 2027) and coordinate with the Synod Leader on orientation support.
    b. **Race Equity and Intercultural Communities** - the EC will be readers and commentators on the antiracism policy drafted by the Network for Dismantling Racism (N4DR).
    c. **Commissioned Pastors and Small Churches** – The EC will be attentive to concerns of smaller congregations and those led by commissioned pastors in any content created for the synod this year.

d. Most of this work is ongoing. A small work group is planning orientation content and reviewing materials from previous assemblies.

4. **CP and Small Church Retreat** – Kristy Rodgers attended planning meetings on our behalf and supported content on spirituality and elder training frames. The event was held October 5-8, 2026 at Camp Gilmont.
5. **Listening sessions with elders and Next Steps**.
    a. Because the rubric work stalled with a member's sabbatical. We shifted to learning what we could about the various ways presbyteries and congregations are approaching elder training. We determined that enough folks have been trained in the last 12 months that we could gather those trained and listen. The **listening sessions** held were: Tuesday, Sep 15, 2026 at 7 pm Central, and Thursday, Sep 17, 2026 at 12 pm Central
    b. In the debriefs, committee members cited **frustrations** with trying to get folks to gather and at the same time a curiosity that those who gathered are hungry for the resources. Continuing conversations are about using the synod **website** to distribute resources and connect folks with elder training content that exists. Negotiating access with those who have the content Last meeting we determined we will use the podcast as a way of highlighting regions and approaches. **Sunspots** will be used to host an occasional series of conversations with elders in the synod – by region – for conversations about the good, bad and ugly of training they have experienced or wished for. **Fred** spoke about the EOP training in Southern areas of the presbytery, the good turnout and how valuable they are. He is willing to host a first conversation for a Sunspots episode. Details will be worked out while we are in person.
6. **Big Survey** follow-up – a rubric was developed over the first months of 2026 meetings and turned into the Grace Presbytery leadership for consultation with the data scientist. Chris Lee's sabbatical interrupted progress and the work has not been returned to to date. The continuing challenges of getting folks to respond to invites will factor into the project. The purpose is to determine the travel limits, means of gathering, use of technology and the topics of concern that would appeal for equipping content in the synod. Care is being taken to coordinate with the EP forum and Clerks.
7. **Budget (2027) for Equipping Committee** -- Molly highlighted some new funds coming in 2027 and the shifting of some budget lines to the Empowering and Coordinating Team where more appropriate and one item to Connecting. Racial Equity resources added in 2027. Additional funds going to N4DR to support their antiracism policy drafting work.
8. **CSP** - The Communication Team offers monthly reports on progress and this year Thomas took a sabbatical so we had a gap. Many new presbyteries (or newly reorganized presbyteries) have created new websites. The staff are very busy covering the clients we have. In September

Thomas highlighted the Presbytery of Northwest FL (new name, formerly Pby of Florida) and their new website coming soon; Lindsay (contractor who does the websites) is on a work break and in US; There is a long-term process happening now to plan for the next iteration (after January) and future of CSP - charges for services, etc., personnel changes (anticipating Thomas' Retirement end of March 2028). The plan for Equipping in the synod will use the synod website and the other communication means so we will build a firmer plan while in Ferncliff. At least one Sunspots series is slated for the remainder of 2026.

9. **For any who might want to join us in 2027** – come to our meeting on Tuesday evening and find out more.

THIS MEETING'S AGENDA

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 27, 2026, after dinner, in person at Ferncliff** The next meeting may have several actions:

- **Election of 2027 leadership**
- **Goals for 2026 review/accomplishments**
- **2027 Budget preview**
- **Intention setting for early 2027**
    - **Orientation Content Planning** for Commissioners in Spring 2027
    - **Communication Plan** - Series on Elder Training - group who were trained talking about its - start with Fred hosting a conversation with South EOP group
    - Clearinghouse Idea for **Resource Distribution** using website - permissions/participation
    - **Survey** project?
- **CSP** update
- Any new business that emerges.

Empowering Committee Report
Synod of the Sun Fall Assembly
October 2026

Synod Youth Workshop (SYW)

Synod Youth Workshop was a wonderful success. Including staff, there were 138 participants, representing twenty-six churches and seven presbyteries. Participants came from several churches that had never attended or that had not attended in a few years. Rev. Michael East of FPC Norman delivered inspiring daily keynotes highlighting our Star Wars theme, May the Lord be with You. As always, the small groups provided a safe place for our youth to discuss their faith and life challenges. Many friendships were formed and spiritual lives were strengthened. Service Projects Day was a high point of the week. The eleven small groups spent the day serving twelve nonprofits in Tulsa.

There were originally 158 participants registered but for various reasons 20 of those could not attend. Sadly, 13 were from Iglesia Latina in Houston. Due to concerns with travel, the parents decided it would be best not to send any participants from their congregation this year. Thankfully, the university only charged for 139 participants instead of the guaranteed 150. This made a significant difference with the scholarships since most of the last-minute cancellations were scholarship recipients. The total of scholarships awarded was $12,234. Eighteen churches in 4 presbyteries (New Covenant, Mission, Grace and Indian Nations) received scholarships. If Iglesia Latina and Pan American School had been able to attend as originally expected, the total awarded scholarships would have been close to the budgeted 19K.

Synod of the Sun was well represented at the conference. Libby Janes delivered an informative talk about the disaster recovery work in the synod. She and Bill Wiles attended on Thursday and made the rounds to the various nonprofit sites where the small groups were serving. Mitch Miller welcomed everyone on Monday and served as an Adult Sponsor for the week. The leadership team is especially grateful for their presence at the conference.

The SYW Leadership Team has reviewed all the evaluations and met to discuss them. They were very complimentary and also included some valuable suggestions. Some of these suggestions are under consideration for the 2027 conference.

There are many pictures and videos of the week available on SYW's Instagram and Facebook pages. The joy of the week is clearly reflected in the smiling faces.

Planning for the 2027 conference is well underway. The keynoter will be Rev. Libby Janes! Libby attended SYW as a youth and was a member of Planning Team. The Leadership Team is excited to welcome her back as the keynoter. There are seven members on the Youth Planning Team, representing 4 presbyteries (Mission - 2, New

Covenant - 1, Palo Duro - 1 and Grace - 3). A scholarship request of $17K was submitted to Synod of the Sun for inclusion in the 2027 budget. This number was derived after reviewing the 2026 numbers and discussion of 2027 participant projections with churches that typically need scholarships. Iglesia Latina and Pan American School are both expecting to attend in 2027. Additionally, an operating request of $7500 was submitted to help cover Small Group Leader and facilities expenses. This is the same amount received in 2026 and is extremely beneficial to the conference. The Fall Planning Team meeting will be in Irving on the weekend of November 14 & 15.

Hispanic Mission Ministries Network (HMMN)

HMMN had a successful Annual Gathering in April and Women's Conference in September. See attached activities report prepared by Lisa Almon.

The Synod of the Sun updated their website to allow donations for HMMN. This is a big step forward in raising finds for HMMN. They are also working on videos to promote HMMN at presbytery meetings and other events.

This month the synod will release to HMMN the 2026 funds budgeted for them. This $39K will primarily be used to pay for the webmaster, the annual meeting and future workshops. The Empowering Committee has requested $15K for HMMN in the 2027 budget. This will help fund the webmaster and Annual Meeting in 2027. The HMMN board will meet later this year to plan for 2027.

Border Ministry

Carlos Baladez has continued to communicate with members of the NW Synod of Mexico. Their synod did not agree to sign the covenant that Synod of the Sun signed. Carlos is continuing to explore projects with them and the hope is that they will come to an agreement in a couple of years.

Empowering Nurture Fund

The Empowering Committee awarded the 5K in their 2026 discretionary fund to Uniidos En Cristo (3K) and Tres Rios Border Foundation (2K).

Respectfully submitted,
Leah McFadden
Moderator - Empowering Committee

Attachment S

HMMN
HISPANIC MINISTRIES MISSION NETWORK

2026 Summary of Activities

Encuentro Anual / Annual Gathering – April 24-25 at Austin Seminary

Total Attendance: 55

Churches/Worshipping Communities represented: El Buen Pastor, Austin; University, San Antonio; Faith, Baytown; Emmanuel, Dallas; Oak Cliff, DeSoto, TX; Gethsemane, Fort Worth; Iglesia Latina, Houston; Renacer en Cristo (non-PCUSA), Rogers, AR; Divine Redeemer, San Antonio; Emmanuel, San Antonio; St. Andrew, San Antonio; University, Austin; Ministerio a la Vecindad; Springdale, AR.

Special Guests: Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dan González-Ortega, Ph.D, and his wife, Alma Miriam Montalbán (Dan is the Presbytery Evangelist for Latinx Ministries in the Presbytery of Milwaukee and the Co-Moderator of the National Presbyterian Hispanic Latino Caucus); Synod Leader Mitch Miller; Cynthia Armendariz and family of the late Ruben Armendariz

Offering: $1,400 was donated to the Armendariz Memorial Scholarship Fund at Austin Seminary

Rev. Dan González-Ortega showed us new ways to view and understand biblical texts by asking "innocent questions" during the plenary sessions. At the Business Meeting, HMMN's bylaws were updated to reflect that one at-large member of the board can be elected from each presbytery in the Synod of the Sun (the previous bylaws only permitted three at-large members), and the Hispanic Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Sun may also designate a representative to serve on HMMN's board.

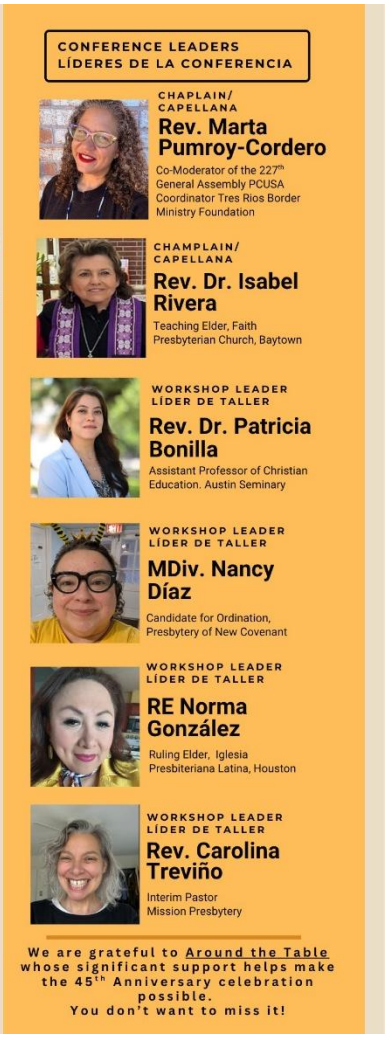


HMMN's next Encuentro at Austin Seminary will be held April 30-May 1, 2027.

For more info on HMMN activities and workshops, please go to www.hmmnetwork.org or look for our Facebook Page: Hispanic Ministries Mission Network – HMMN. There you will also find our weekly devotional, written by Co-Moderator Larry Sears and translated by Yoan Zamora.

The Hispanic Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Sun held their annual conference at Mo-Ranch on September 25-27, 2026. Complete records of the history of this conference are unavailable, but we believe this was our 45th Anniversary! Gloria a Dios!





Theme: Tapestry of Grace… Woven by God; Romans 12:5

Attendees: 110 (108 Women, 2 men), from 16 churches

First-Time Attendees: 22

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Rosa Miranda, Global Ecumenical Liaison for U.S. Hispanic Brazilian Communities with the PC(USA) Office of Life and Witness

Offering: $800 in cash/checks (awaiting info for online donations via QR Code)

Offering Recipient: Mi Escuelita, Dallas, TX

We were honored to have **Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero,** the Co-Moderator of the 227th G.A. join us again, this year serving with **Rev. Dr. Isabel Rivera** as Chaplains for the Conference.

Rev. Dr. Patricia Bonilla of Austin Seminary led a workshop for young women (ages 30 and under).



Save the Date! The 2027 HPW Conference will be held on Sept. 24-26 at Mo-Ranch.

The HPWC planning committee elected Celeste Blue to serve as their representative on the HMMN board.

Hispanic Ministries Mission Network Board Members:
Larry Sears, Co-Moderator; José Muñoz, Co-Moderator
Deanna Vela, Secretary; Aimée Castro, Rep. for Grace Presbytery
Lisa Almon, Treasurer & Rep. for Mission Presbytery
Rev. Dr. Isabel Rivera-Vélez, Rep. for the Presbytery of New Covenant
Rev. Dr. Jesús Juan "Jesse" González, Rep. for the Presbytery of Arkansas
Celeste Blue, Rep. for the Hispanic PW Conference

Attachment T

Synod of the Sun – Submitted with prayer, praise and gratitude, *Polly Warren Williams*

Report For the Synod Assembly Gathering at Ferncliff
October 2026 On behalf of the

Grants and Scholarship Commission

We offer great gratitude to our brother and colleague, Todd Freeman who rotates off our commission in 2026 and give thanks for the Nominating Committee of the Synod of the Sun for bringing for approval by the body the following proposed roster for the

Synod of the Sun Grants and Scholarship Commission 2027:

Class of 2028: Commissioners Polly Williams, Chair, from Grace;
and Commissioner at Large Linda Trueblood, from South Louisiana,

Class of 2029: Commissioners at Large: Lynn Hargrove from New Covenant,
and Ruth Roman Meza; from Grace
and Commissioner Fred Bray of Eastern Oklahoma.

As reported in Irving in February, our first meeting of 2026 took part over two days. We met Thursday, February 5, 2026 and needed additional time which concluded over zoom on Tuesday, February 10, 2026.

It is publicized on the synod webpage, we meet minimally at the close of each quarter to consider any requests received to date. Thus, our first meeting of the year is to assess fourth quarter considerations and the early receipt for Synod of the Sun Presbyterian Foundation scholarship consideration.

We are strengthened in 2026 with returning voting members Todd Freeman and Lynn Hargrove. Also, Lisa Almon representing HMMN, with our synod leader and synod treasurer – Mitch and Bill providing invaluable insight when considering best use of available funds. ALWAYS grateful for any generosity, we strive to respect donor or prior synod placed restrictions and keep an eye on stewardship, not all of our line items receive quarterly income.

In 2026, we welcome the input, enthusiasm, connections and familiarity with our Synod of SPDR's director, Libby Janes.

Other meetings this year took place in We met in September. Our report in October will include that year to date in 2026, we have distributed $88,125.00.

We hope to meet once more before the Synod Assembly in October to consider ALL 3rd quarter 2026 requests.

4th quarter requests will be monitored as they are submitted for timeliness/immediacy though our goal is to follow prior years' schedules and consider 4th quarter 2026 requests in Jan or early Feb 2027. We will communicate to those who submit requests and be in touch with appropriate colleagues per presbytery. Working w/Bill Wiles and Libby Janes, we are considering budget recommendations and w/Bill, Libby, Tom Riggs and Tammy Stepka to improve processes and forms.

I celebrate the opportunity to serve with the commission and our advisors across these boundaries. I look forward to working with each and all presbyteries in 2027!



TOTAL DISTRIBUTED TO DATE IN 2026: $88,125.00

BY PRESBYTERY:

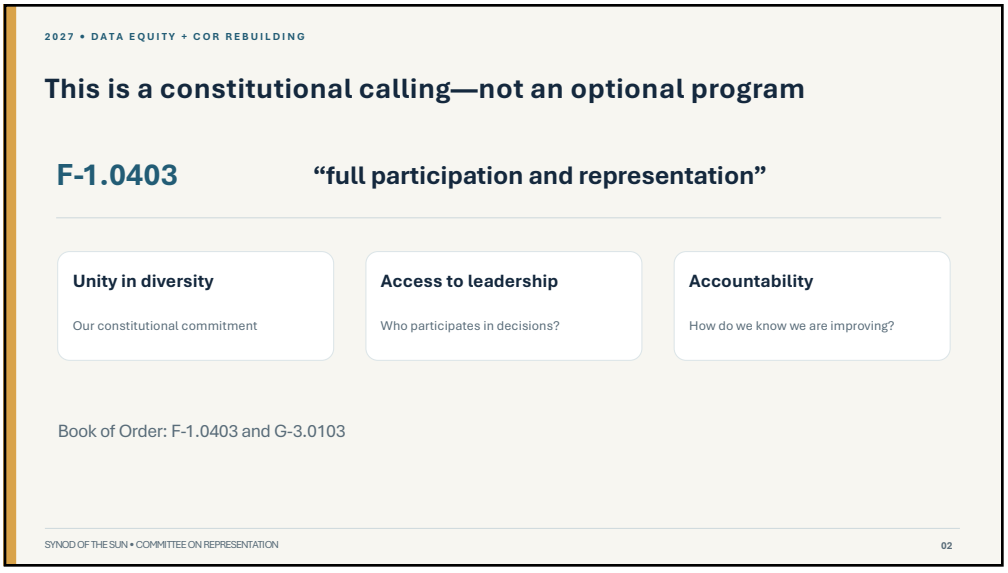
Cimarron We love you. Help us help you in 2027.
Eastern Oklahoma $ 3,250.00
Grace Presbytery $ 20,235.00
Indian Nations We love you. Help us help you in 2027.
Mission Presbytery $ 22,550.00
New Covenant Presbytery $ 9,000.00
Palo Duro Presbytery $ 10,000.00
Presbytery of Arkansas $ 2,500.00
Presbytery of the Pines $ 20,590.00
Presbytery of SLa We love you. Help us help you in 2027.
Tres Rios We love you. Help us help you in 2027.

BY FUND:

33110/20	Albert Crisp Orphanage	$ 9,000.00
33140	Seminary Course Scholarship Fund	$ 1,635.00
33160	Racial/Ethnic Ministries	$ 5,000.00
33170	Peacemaking	$ 1,000.00
33187	Aid for Pastors	$ 1,100.00
33189	National Mission in TX	$ 7,500.00
33190	Missions in Texas	$ 5,000.00
33200	Old Age Concerns	$ 10,000.00
33210	Higher Education	$ 5,000.00
33300	Kerr Munson	$ 2,500.00
33900	SOSPF Scholarship Fund	$ 14,340.00
61040	Mission Grants	$ 26,050.00


SYNOD OF THE SUN • 2027 BUDGET PROPOSAL
FROM REPRESENTATION TO BELONGING
Data Equity Project and Committee on Representation Renewal
$18,000 Data Equity Project • $7,000 COR rebuilding (preliminary)
Synod Assembly | October 2026

1


2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING
This is a constitutional calling—not an optional program
F-1.0403
“full participation and representation”
Unity in diversity
Our constitutional commitment
Access to leadership
Who participates in decisions?
Accountability
How do we know we are improving?
Book of Order: F-1.0403 and G-3.0103
SYNOD OF THE SUN • COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
02

2

2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING

An inactive committee cannot fulfill an active mandate

OUR PRESENT CHALLENGE

Relationships to rebuild.
Data to establish.
Leaders to equip.
Barriers to identify.

THE 2027 OPPORTUNITY

Reconstitute
Reconnect
Measure
Equip
Report

The $18,000 supports data equity; the preliminary $7,000 supports COR rebuilding.

3

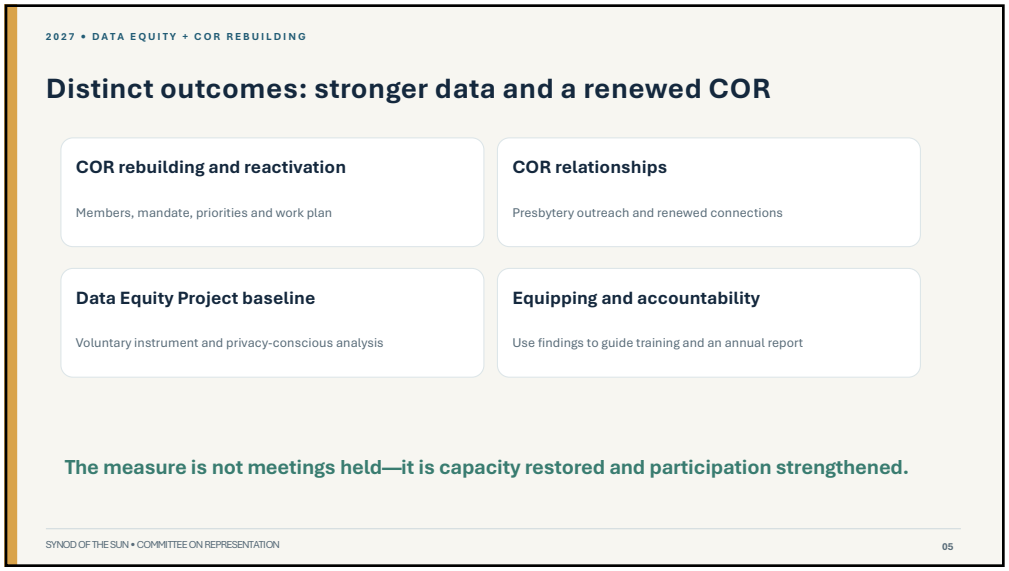
DATA EQUITY PROJECT • PROPOSED APPROACH

A simple instrument. Better understanding. Wiser action.

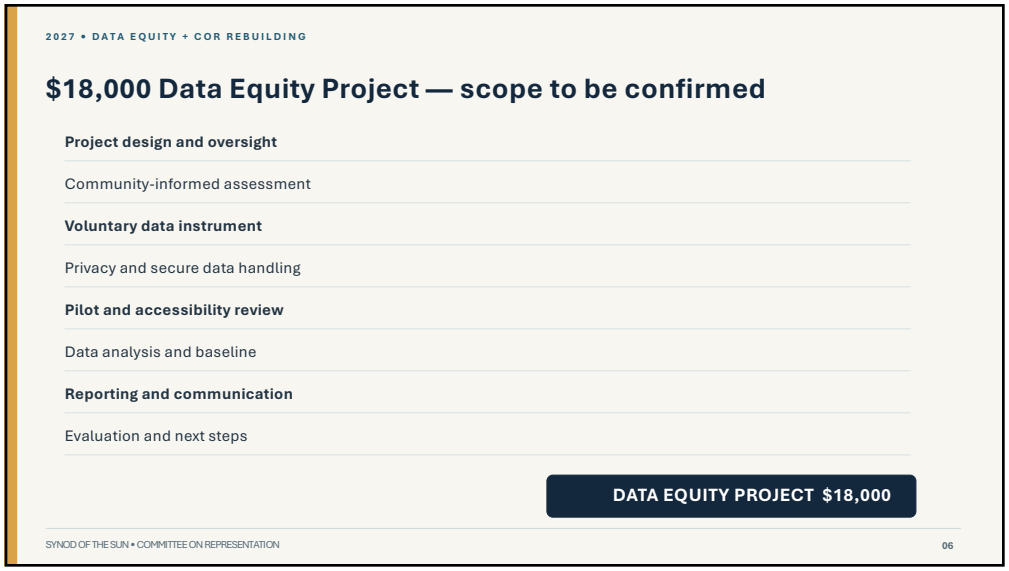
1	**Invite**	Brief, accessible, voluntary self-identification
2	**Protect**	Privacy, choice, and careful data handling
3	**Understand**	Disaggregated and intersectional group patterns
4	**Act**	Identify gaps and remove participation barriers

Collect only what is necessary • Allow “prefer not to answer” • We will not report out small group numbers in public reports to protect privacy

4


2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING
Distinct outcomes: stronger data and a renewed COR
COR rebuilding and reactivation
Members, mandate, priorities and work plan
COR relationships
Presbytery outreach and renewed connections
Data Equity Project baseline
Voluntary instrument and privacy-conscious analysis
Equipping and accountability
Use findings to guide training and an annual report
The measure is not meetings held—it is capacity restored and participation strengthened.
SYNOD OF THE SUN • COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
05

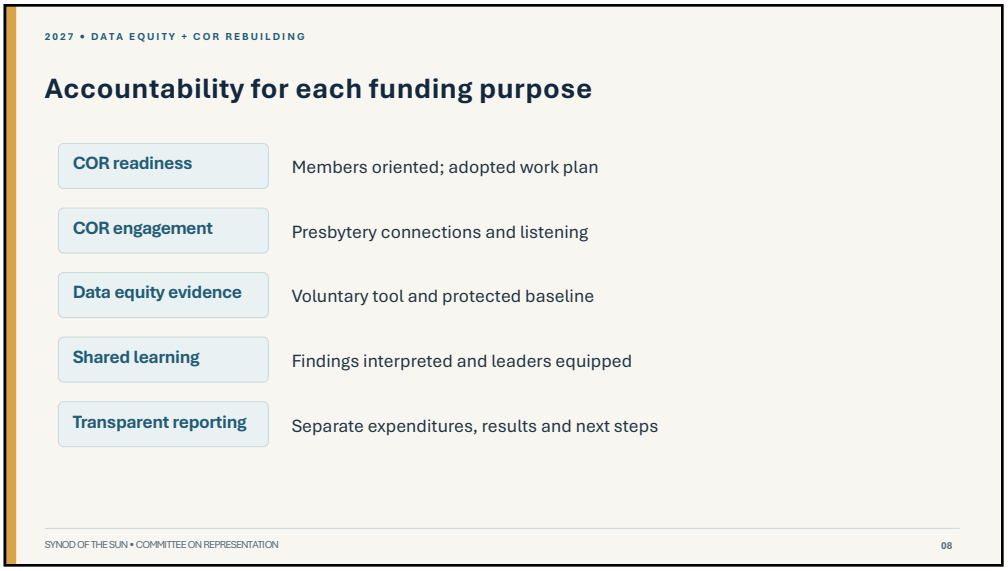
5


2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING
$18,000 Data Equity Project — scope to be confirmed
Project design and oversight
Community-informed assessment
Voluntary data instrument
Privacy and secure data handling
Pilot and accessibility review
Data analysis and baseline
Reporting and communication
Evaluation and next steps
DATA EQUITY PROJECT $18,000
SYNOD OF THE SUN • COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
06

6


2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING
Two distinct funding purposes for 2027
DATA EQUITY
PROJECT INVESTMENT
$18,000
Instrument • privacy • baseline
COR REBUILDING
PRELIMINARY 2027 ALLOCATION
$7,000
Reconstitute • reconnect • equip
COMBINED
PROPOSED PLANNING TOTAL
$25,000
Separate purposes • separate tracking
Working interpretation—confirm allocation and scope with Mitch before Assembly.
SYNOD OF THE SUN • COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
07

7


2027 • DATA EQUITY + COR REBUILDING
Accountability for each funding purpose
COR readiness
Members oriented; adopted work plan
COR engagement
Presbytery connections and listening
Data equity evidence
Voluntary tool and protected baseline
Shared learning
Findings interpreted and leaders equipped
Transparent reporting
Separate expenditures, results and next steps
SYNOD OF THE SUN • COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION
08

8

THE REQUEST BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

Consider the two proposed, distinct allocations

$18,000 Data Equity Project + $7,000 COR rebuilding (preliminary)

Not just a committee that exists.
A ministry that equips the whole Synod to belong and lead.

"We are one body in Christ." — Romans 12:5

9

REFERENCE SLIDE • NOT PART OF 10-MINUTE REMARKS

Appendix • constitutional and planning references

PC(USA) Book of Order (2025–2027)

F-1.0403 — Unity in Diversity; G-3.0103 — representation and council responsibilities

Synod of the Sun • Representation Committee

Synod committee descriptions and Synod Assembly resources

Working split: $18,000 Data Equity Project; $7,000 preliminary COR rebuilding. Confirm with Mitch.

10

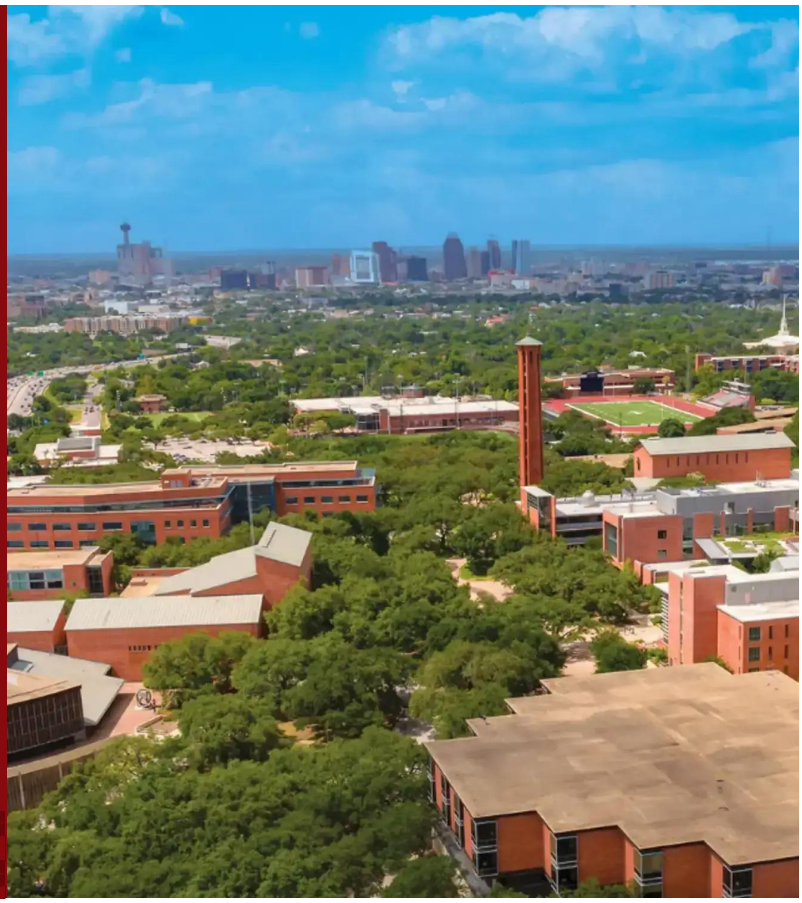
Attachment V

TRINITY
UNIVERSITY

Report to the Synod of the Sun

October 2026

Rev. Alex Serna-Wallender ’08
University Chaplain | Everett H Jones Chair



TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Trinity by the Numbers



28%

Admit Rate
(11,658 Applicants)

60%

Students Graduate with zero debt

8:1

Student/Faculty Ratio

$2.3B

Endowment

2,450

Undergraduate Students

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Trinity in the 2027 Rankings



#2

Best College in Texas (WalletHub)

#16

Best Liberal Arts Colleges in America
(Niche)

#1

Liberal Arts College in Texas
(US News & World Report)

#49

Best College & University Nationally
(WalletHub)

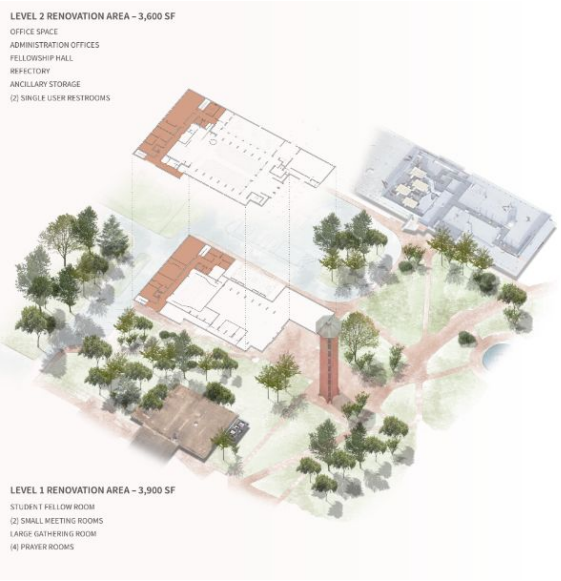
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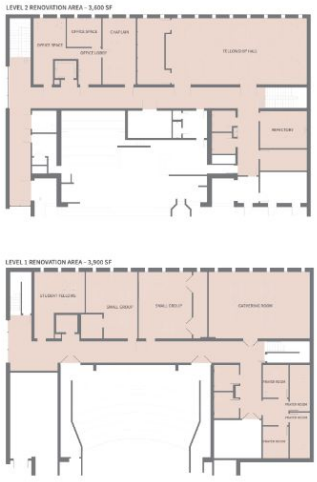
National Liberal Arts Colleges
(US News & World Report)

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

The Judd Center for Spiritual Life & Formation

The Judd Center for Spiritual Life and Formation





MARGARET B. PARKER CHAPEL RENOVATION STUDY



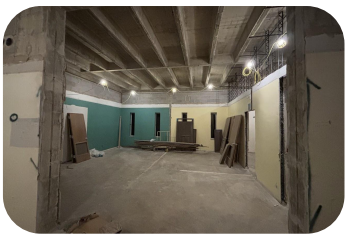
Judd Center for Spiritual Life and Formation

- Demolition & construction well underway
- On track for a Spring 2027 opening.
- Dedication date still to be determined.









Judd Center for Spiritual Life and Formation

As we await the reopening of the Judd Center, our student leaders have been innovative in their use of spaces in and around the Chapel.

From the narthex, to the meditation chapel, vestibules, and lounges the engagement in offerings and space needs have made the need for the Judd Center all the clearer.









know your neighbor
TRINITY UNIVERSITY

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Know Your Neighbor - Trinity

Know Your Neighbor - Trinity is a framework collection of programs, offerings, and invitations sponsored by Trinity University's Chapel | Spiritual Life office, which invites members of the Trinity community to explore and begin to answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

know your neighbor
TRINITY UNIVERSITY

TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Know Your Neighbor - Trinity

Regular Programs

Worthy Questions, Dinner & Dialogue, Interfaith Tea, Chapel Cafe, Leading with Heart

Annual Offerings

The Plunge, SPARK Summer Internship, Retreats, *Be A Neighbor*

Ongoing Invitations

Weekly Conversation Prompts, Conversation Playing Cards, Kindness Project, & more

know your neighbor
TRINITY UNIVERSITY









TRINITY UNIVERSITY

SPARK

Summer Internship Program

- **Summer 2025 & 2026 pilot program funded by a $40,000 grant** from Network on Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) & the Lilly Foundation.
- **4 students** are part of the pilot program each summer.
- Summer 2026 the four students will work at:
  - Travis Park United Methodist CHurch
  - Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
  - Muslim Children Education & Civic Center
  - Iglesia Cristiana Roca de Refugio



TRINITY UNIVERSITY

Know Your Neighbor - Trinity
Be A Neighbor Program

University-wide program that pairs students with a fellow student (and staff/faculty with a fellow staff/faculty member) for a series of six conversations over the semester of low-pressure, in-person conversation.

Be a Neighbor is built on a simple idea: that showing up for one another, a little bit at a time, over a season, is how community gets built.



Questions?

TRINITY
UNIVERSITY



Attachment W

SCHREINER'S PRESBYTERIAN ROOTS

Founded in 1923 through the united efforts of Captain Charles Schreiner and the Presbytery of Western Texas, Schreiner University remains affiliated by choice and by covenant with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Joining over sixty Presbyterian-related colleges and universities nationwide, we embody the theological conviction that God is glorified in a humanity that is fully alive, and we affirm the whole of life as the appropriate subject matter of learning. Our institutional relationship is formalized through a living Covenant with the Synod of the Sun, affirming a shared spiritual partnership and mutual trust.

As an integral part of the PC (U.S.A.) mission, we carry out our educational purpose with the conviction that the pursuit of knowledge in the liberal arts and professional studies is integral to the Christian mission of worship and service. To provide visible evidence of this covenant, the University maintains a meaningful representation of Presbyterians on its Board of Trustees and supports an ecumenical campus ministry program directed by a PC (U.S.A.) minister. Furthermore, we incorporate the study of religion as a core component of a liberal arts education, empowering students to assimilate knowledge through personalized, integrated, and holistic educational experiences.

Schreiner University continues to expand its educational capacity to serve its student body and the broader community. Recently, as part of a six-institution consortium alongside institutions sharing our Presbyterian heritage such as Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin College, and Presbyterian Pan American School, the university participated in securing a $10 million grant through the Lilly Endowment and is providing institutional leadership in establishing the Center for the Arc of Ministry. Concurrently, we formalized academic exchange agreements with South Korean institutions, including Soongsil, Keimyung, Hannam, Seoul Women's University, and Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary. These partnerships draw upon a shared Presbyterian mission and educational heritage. By connecting these historic roots, we enhance our academic programs through collaborative teaching, interdisciplinary research, and mutual learning.







RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND UPCOMING PRIORITIES

An ongoing priority is expanding access to theological education and strengthening the "Arc of Ministry," a comprehensive theological framework acknowledging that vocational discernment requires sustained, lifelong formation. To support this, we are currently developing a stackable, 24-credit Pre-Seminary Leadership micro-credential Program, and we have launched a concurrent dual degree M.Div./MBA in Ethical Leadership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Furthermore, through our historic Presbyterian Pan American Schreiner Agreement (PASA), we are actively designing a Seven-Year Educational Pathway utilizing dual credit coursework to reduce the time and financial requirements for students transitioning from secondary school to collegiate study, and ultimately to graduate education.



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESBYTERIAN PAN-AMERICAN SCHOOL

The partnership between Schreiner and Presbyterian Pan American School began in earnest in 2003 with the Pan American Schreiner Agreement (PASA) whereby Schreiner encouraged graduates from Pan Am to attend Schreiner by providing a full-ride scholarship to one Pan Am student each year (half funded by Schreiner and half funded by Presbyterian churches and individuals). Anna Rosales (SU '04) was the first PASA student and upon graduation from Schreiner she attended and graduated from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (and is now working to obtain her Ph.D.). The Rev. Jasiel Garcia (SU '15) is another notable graduate of Pan Am, Schreiner, and APTS. He is now pastor of First Presbyterian Church Kerrville. For Rev. David Angulo (SU '21), becoming a Presbyterian pastor was not the beginning of his story. It was the culmination of years of faithful investment by the Presbyterian community and the transformative power of Presbyterian education which began at Pan Am, extended through Schreiner, and concluded at APTS.

The latest evolution of the partnership is Presbyterian Organizations Partnership for Student Support (POPSS). POPSS creates an alliance through which Pan American Students may complete both high school and college in 7 years thus reducing their cost of education and their uncertainty which their collegiate path may look like. Working with these students is truly missional, as they come from countries where high-quality educational opportunities, and especially limited to these students whose families often face significant economic challenges. Students participating in POPSS will have a high-quality pathway through high school and college that is predictable, and that therefore can be planned out. With the full launch of POPSS, new opportunities will open at Mo-Ranch and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to these students for still other seamless pathways to summer internships and work as well as graduate education. Altogether, these experiences, skills, and relationships will help students build a life of purpose and positively position them for post-education success.

Not every student who participates in POPSS will attend seminary, but every POPSS student will get the benefit of a transformative Presbyterian education.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP

We respectfully invite our Synod commissioners, presbyteries, and covenant partners to engage with us in this spiritual partnership. To deliberately enhance our relationship with the PC(USA) and foster structural collaboration with congregations, we have revitalized our Church Relations Council (CRC). Designed to support our "Restoration" vision, the CRC adapts our foundational legacy to address the pedagogical challenges of the Digital Generation and integrate faith with professional leadership. We seek dedicated partners to join this council. If you share the vision of advancing Schreiner University and Presbyterian higher education, and preparing future generations for Christian service, we invite you to participate in the CRC. We look forward to the possibility of serving together in this shared mission.

To explore how we can collaborate, please contact:

REV. DONGWOO LEE, PH.D.
dlee@schreiner.edu | 830-792-7274

Attachment X

Austin College Written Report to the Synod of the Sun Assembly

October 2026

Friends, it is our pleasure to share this update with our friends and colleagues in the Synod of the Sun.

First and foremost, we are very excited to welcome **Dr. Rebecca Cantor** as the Seventeenth President of Austin College. Her Installation will take place in Wynne Chapel on our campus at 11:00am on Friday November 13.

What follows is a brief summary of some of the ways Austin College works through our Religious Life and Church Relations programs to live out the values and commitments contained in our Mission Statement and our Covenant with the Synod.

Service Station

The Austin College Service Station is the aspect of the Religious Life Program that engages the greatest number of Austin College students. It exists to identify and promote opportunities for Austin College students to engage in community service.

Student Board members work with the Coordinator of Volunteer Services to maintain relationships with local non-profits, facilitate service activities by student groups, and plan and lead the following campus-wide service opportunities

- **First We Serve**
  - This is a service project during Opening of School week in which entering students are encouraged to gather in Sid Richardson Gym in the afternoon before Opening Convocation and prepare nutritious meals to be sent to a mission on the Moskito Coast of Honduras.
  - **210 students participated in First We Serve in August 2025**

- **Great Day of Service**

        - On the first Saturday of November, the Service Station Board hosts the Great Day of Service in which Austin College students, faculty, and staff spend the morning engaged in service at approximately 35 different non-profits in the Texoma area.
        - **213 students participated in Great Day of Service in November 2025**

- **Jan Serve**
    - The Service Station works with Austin College athletes and coaches to host a Special Olympics Basketball tournament in Hughey and Sid Richardson Gyms on the 3rd Wednesday of January.
    - **89 students participated in Jan Serve in January 2026**

- **Tostan Dinner**
    - Each year the Service Station hosts the Tostan Dinner and Art Auction.
    - **152 Students, Faculty, and Staff attended the Tostan Dinner/Art Auction in February 2026 and raised $770.77 that was sent to Tostan.**

- **Alternative Spring Break**
    - Each year the Service Station Board organizes an Alternative Spring Break trip in which 20 students and 4-5 sponsors travel to a location chosen by the Board to perform Community service for the week.
    - **21 students and 4 sponsors attended the Alternative Spring Break trip doing flood relief work at Mo-Ranch in March 2026.**

- **Green Serve**
    - Each Spring, the Service Station Board works with Environmental Studies students and faculty to coordinate and promote environmentally-based service projects for interested students.

Service Station Summary:

- **In 2025-26, the Service Station logged 18,530 total service hours by Austin College students working through Service Station Programs or service projects of one of nine student organizations.**
    - **That's 2.12 YEARS of service**
    - **Worth $134,342 if compensated at Minimum Wage**

Worship

Austin College provides multiple opportunities for interested students to participate in Christian Worship services on our campus.

Sunday Nights

- The College hosts a Communion Service in Majors Chapel at 6:00pm every Sunday during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- The services are planned and led by students.
- Each week. the College Chaplain celebrates the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Talk-Back

- Students eat dinner together after Sunday night Worship
- Usually in the Chaplain's Home
- The Chaplain's spouse and 3-4 students usually cook Sunday night dinner.

Bible Study

- 5:30pm Tuesdays in the Moseley Room
- Lectionary-based
- Leads to the writing of the following Sunday's Worship service by the Chaplain and 2 Majors Interns

ACtivators

- In 2025-26, the Austin College ACtivators program involved 36 Austin College students who planned and led 24 ministry events involving approximately 1000 children, youth, college students, adults, and senior citizens.
- Since its founding in April 1995, the ACtivators Program has involved
    - 675 Austin College students who have traveled

    - Over 194,000 miles
    - To plan and lead 796 ministry events
    - Involving over 60,000 children, youth, college students, adults, and senior citizens
    - From 14 states.
- As of May 2026, 58 former ACtivators serve as full-time clergy or educators in Presbyterian Church USA congregations or specialized ministries in 12 states.

Scholarships

- Since Fall 2024, Austin College has operated the two-tiered **Westminster Scholarship Program for Outstanding Presbyterian Students**
    - Tier I
        - Full Tuition, Housing, and Dining charges for dependents of Presbyterian Church (USA) Church Professionals
    - Tier II
        - Full tuition for students who are members of Presbyterian Church (USA) Congregations
    - In 2026-27, there are 83 Westminster Scholars in the Austin College student body

SEPA Program

- Through the Austin College SEPA program (Student Entrepreneurship for Poverty Alleviation), selected Austin College students are paid a stipend to the spend the Summer writing grants for local non-profits.
- We are currently working with the Synod to develop a SEPA Internship for a student to spend the Summer working at the Synod Office and writing grants for the Synod's Ministry Partners.

For more information about Austin College, contact Chaplain John Williams at 903.813.2220 or jwilliams@austincollege.edu.

Attachment Y

Oct. 27-29, 2026

Grace and peace to you, siblings in Christ and the Synod of the Sun. Presbyterian Pan American School sends greetings from the Coastal Bend of South Texas.

Exciting things are happening at PanAm, a residential, co-educational, secondary school, with a mission of inspiring, educating and equipping international students from the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

PanAm has installed its first full-time residential chaplain in seven years, the Rev. Dori Hjalmarson. Dori comes to Mission Presbytery and Synod of the Sun from Santa Fe Presbytery and Synod of the Southwest, where she was ordained in 2017 to the role of mission co-worker and facilitator for theological education and leadership development with the Presbyterian Church of Honduras. When that role ended in 2025, Dori returned to the United States and awaited her new call. She started at PanAm in July.

Starting this year, PanAm is a joint participant with Menaul School, Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy, Huston-Tillotson University, Schreiner University and Austin College in a Lilly Endowment grant to implement a vocational pathway program called the Arc of Ministry Center at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The center's aims are to cultivate pastoral leaders equipped to serve churches' evolving needs and to awaken and nurture spiritual and vocational imagination of young theological leaders from high school through college and graduate school. We look forward to reporting exciting results in coming years as the center and its programs are launched.

PanAm continues efforts to grow enrollment; Claudia Miranda, class of 2002, was promoted to admissions director last year and is making progress. We have 40 students enrolled this year, with the primary obstacle to enrollment being student visa accessibility and capricious U.S. State Department immigration policies. The primary driver of new applications is knowing someone—a family member or friend—who is an alumnus or who knows the school. Ms. Miranda is working hard to network with graduates and alumni to promote the school and recruit students; we hope that Synod of the Sun representatives will also be a source of recommendations of prospective students.

Thank you to the Synod of the Sun and Mission Presbytery for all their efforts in providing connectional support and grounding for PPAS's faith-rooted mission.

In Christ,

The Rev. Dori Kay Hjalmarson, chaplain

Attachment Z

Austin Seminary
WHERE FAITH INTERSECTS PURPOSE

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100 East 27th Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5711
Phone: 512-404-4800 | Fax: 512-479-0738
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Report to the Synod of the Sun

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For the glory of God and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary is a seminary in the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition whose mission is to educate and equip individuals for ordained Christian ministry and other forms of Christian service and leadership; to employ its resources for the nurture of the church; to practice and promote critical theological thought and research; to engage a range of voices and perspectives within and beyond the life of the seminary; and to be a winsome and exemplary community of God's people.

The Reverend Dr. José R. Irizarry serves as the tenth president of Austin Seminary. Under his leadership, and with the continued wise guidance of the Board of Trustees, Austin Seminary adopted a strategic plan for 2026 through 2031. The plan maintains a strong commitment to excellence in graduate theological education, along with a robust certificate program that ensures anyone called to ministry has a path to theological formation. Shaped by a year of listening to alumni, students, faculty, and the seminary's broader constituency, the plan also directs the institution to explore expanding access to its academic programs through hybrid models of education, to strengthen its commitment to public witness, and to deepen its educational and ecclesial partnerships.

This past academic year, Austin Seminary served 168 master's- and doctoral-level students, along with 65 certificate students. Its students are prepared to transcend borders and build bridges; they are the leaders the church needs most. Beyond its academic programs, the seminary offered grant-funded programming in young adult faith formation, transformational storytelling, congregational renewal, and the practice of sharing faith. The community of learners at Austin Seminary is grateful for the many alumni and friends who support theological education. Because of the generosity of donors past and present, the seminary's financial position is strong. Looking to the future, the seminary holds a deep confidence that, together with the churches of the Synod of the Sun, its resources and strengths are meeting the challenges of theological education today, and that its graduates carry that formation across the nation and around the world.

NOROC's Journey: Past, Present and Future

For more than 29 years the **NOROC ministry (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children)** has offered love, care, education and emotional support to nurture the lives of Romanian children who have been orphaned, abandoned or abused. Our Mission Statement below has guided our ministry during this time:

NOROC's mission is to offer new opportunities for spiritual, physical, educational, and emotional growth so that at-risk Romanian institutionalized children may escape cycles of poverty, dependency, and abuse, and may become independent adults who can nurture meaningful relationships and contribute to their communities.

A short history will help in understanding the impact NOROC has made in the lives of hundreds of children for nearly 30 years.

NOROC Inc. was founded in Abilene, Texas in April 1994 because of Carolyn White's inspiration and efforts to improve the lives of institutionalized children in Romania. Three years later, in February 1997, **NOROC Tulcea** was officially launched. Dr. Fred White, Carolyn White, and Petru Solca remain founding members 29 years later!

We began with six **Big-Hearted Grannies** (later expanded to 14) who cared for children in the Center for Dystrophic Children. The Grannies loved and cared for babies who needed to be loved, touched, rocked, and played with so they could thrive. One year later, more Grannies were hired to work in the Center for Preschoolers in a nearby village. Two years later, in 1999, the **Big-Hearted Teachers Program** began placing teachers in the large girls' and boys' homes as tutors and elementary students began to pass their grade levels. Next, the **Big-Hearted Professors Program** was added to help students prepare for high school and university. Twenty-nine years later, NOROC has enabled thirty-four youth from the state run institutions to graduate from universities with bachelor's or master's degrees, seven with associate degrees, and four who are currently in universities. In addition, numerous young people have received high school diplomas and vocational degrees which have enabled them to become contributing members of society. Countless others, too many to name, received help from NOROC which increased their quality of life either financially, emotionally, or physically. The NOROC ministry has always looked to the future and adapted to the needs of the children by asking this question, "What can we do to serve the children better?" Before NOROC the future of an orphaned, abandoned, and abused child in the state institutions was at best an eighth-grade education and menial labor. NOROC passionately believes that love and education are the keys to changing lives!

From 2001-2011 Rev. Mary Ferris served as NOROC's first Mission Co-Worker. She helped NOROC expand programming and develop the **Big-Hearted Friends Program** at the Boys' and

Girls' Homes. The **Big-Hearted Friends Program** included family style groups to teach life skills and offer emotional support as well as special interest groups including sewing, cooking, art, sports, photography, Bible study, and computer skills. Field trips to cultural and religious centers were offered. Partnerships were formed with other local organizations to offer new activities including therapeutic horse-riding lessons, and overnight or day camps. Four properties were purchased to expand NOROC's ability to work with the children and youth in safe and more intimate environments, and to offer additional space for small group activities. This includes a club house for larger group activities on one of the properties. Some of these properties were purchased with grants from the Presbyterian Women, PCUSA.

After Mary Ferris retired, Liz Searles began her tenure as Mission Co-Worker from 2012-2015. followed by Carol Schempp, from 2018-2022. From 2022-2025 Rev. Kristen Harris served as NOROC's Mission Co-Worker at a time when many transitions were beginning to take place including involvement with Ukraine refugees and the development of the Day Center.

When the pandemic began, NOROC once again had to adapt to the changes not only in Romania but in the entire world. When face to face group meetings were banned, NOROC adapted by hosting small group meetings via Zoom and sending supplies to children in their centers. The children always knew that NOROC was still there for them, a stable and constant source of support. When the pandemic ended and programming restarted, certain activities could not resume due to restrictions and retirement of staff/volunteers, but NOROC adapted and its ministry continued.

When the war in Ukraine began, with refugees pouring across the borders into Tulcea County, NOROC adapted by raising money to assist with emergency needs of the refugees, especially displaced children, and then later to longer term assistance and partnerships with other organizations. Presently we maintain a relationship with several families who settled in Tulcea, Volunteers without Borders, an aid shipping organization, and Camp Ozerne in Ukraine, a camp for Internally Displaced Persons.

In 2024 the Child Protection System (the System) in Romania changed the requirements for organizations like NOROC who work with vulnerable populations. NOROC has always been accredited as an NGO in Romania, but becoming a licensed social service agency became a priority if we wanted to continue working with children from the state centers. NOROC again adapted to the changes. While the core mission of NOROC Tulcea did not have to change, the way the staff goes about their work needed adjustments. A part of fulfilling this requirement was converting one of our properties, Casa Noastra, into an office and changing the purpose to a "Day Center." The Romanian side of NOROC re-expanded and honed its programming to meet the requirements of the new laws. The main change for the staff was in how they track their work with the children. Today the Day Center is fully licensed and coordinated by our Liaison for Programming and Day Center Activities, Andreea Ivanov. Most importantly, NOROC can continue its life-changing work with the children as it carries out the mission of NOROC.

As the laws in Romania for children living in state run institutions have changed over the years, NOROC has continually adapted its programs and activities to meet the needs of the children we serve. Babies and children under the age of seven no longer live in institutions but instead are in state-sponsored foster care. The large institutions have been replaced by smaller cottage-like centers or apartments. The bulk of the youth we now serve are in middle school and high school. To meet the needs of these older youth we are beginning a new, targeted project, ***Pathways to Independence,*** headed by Andreea Ivanov. It is designed to prevent these youth from leaving the Child Protection System unprepared for their future outside of the institution. We are blessed to be a Covenant Partner with the Synod of the Sun and to receive funds from the Synod to begin our project in November.

Teenagers involved in the Child Protection System of Tulcea County, Romania face a critical and often dangerous transition into adulthood. They are incentivized or required to leave care of the System without adequate education, life skills, or supportive relationships. As a result, they are at heightened risk of poor quality of life outcomes, including homelessness, unemployment, addiction, exploitation, abuse, and human trafficking. ***Pathways to Independence*** is a faith-informed project designed to support at-risk youth (ages 14–18) before they exit the system at age 18. This project will serve three groups of 10–12 teenagers through a module of life skills workshops, mentoring sessions, and guided planning activities each 6-8 weeks in duration per group. This module will be repeated three (3) times during the year to reach all at-risk youth in this age group. The project focuses on prevention—strengthening young people's ability to make safe decisions, recognize risk, and build healthy, independent lives rooted in dignity and purpose. Without preparation in areas such as financial management, employment readiness, emotional regulation, and personal safety, these young people are especially vulnerable during early adulthood.

The absence of guidance and stability significantly increases the risk of:

- Substance abuse and addiction as a coping mechanism
- Exploitative relationships and abuse
- Labor and sex trafficking
- Cycles of poverty and instability

As a faith community NOROC is uniquely positioned to respond to this need by offering not only skills training, but also consistent presence, moral grounding, and a sense of belonging. Early relational intervention can be a powerful form of prevention, helping youth avoid harm and move toward healthy adulthood.

The three core components of ***Pathways to Independence*** are Life Skills and Independence Workshops, Mentorships and Faith-Aligned Role Models, and a Personal Independence and Life Plan. Participants will engage with NOROC staff, caring adults, and guest speakers, including individuals who have successfully transitioned out of the system and community members committed to service. These relationships model healthy adulthood, responsibility, and hope.

Serving as a practical and symbolic step toward independence and self-worth, the personalized plan completed by each participant will include:

- Short-term and long-term goals
- Education or employment pathways
- A basic monthly budget
- Trusted adults and support resources

The three main goals of ***Pathways to Independence*** are to equip youth with practical skills for independent living, to reduce vulnerability to addiction, abuse, and exploitation, and to foster confidence, resilience, and hope for the future. ***Pathways to Independence*** responds to a critical moment in the lives of vulnerable youth with compassion, practicality, and faith. In short, this project will help ensure that young people leaving care of the System are equipped to lead a safe, stable, and hopeful future. More information about NOROC can be found at www.noroc.org

As a Covenant Partner with the Synod of the Sun, NOROC continues to look to the future. We have learned that many things can change: the laws, the ages of the children in the state institutions, the needs of the children. However, we have also learned that one thing never changes: these children will always need the love and guidance that NOROC offers to them and the understanding that they are truly God's children, and NOROC will always be there!