

# Presbytery of New Covenant



Stated Meeting

March 22, 2025

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston 77005

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### **Acknowledgment of Native Lands and Peoples**

We begin this gathering by recognizing that the land upon which we meet is the location of the ancestral homelands of many different nations, which include Alabama Coushatta, Anadarko, Biloxi, Caddo, Chickasaw, Karankawa, Kichai, Pankana Muskogee, Shawnee, Tawakoni, and Tonkawa, as well as our Hispanic neighbors to our south. We recognize that the state of Texas once belonged to Mexico.

We declare our respect for these children of God and our desire to honor them and the truth of their lives and their history, our shared history including the broken promises and other sins for which the dominant culture must repent. We affirm our responsibility to those who are still here, sometimes unseen, and we look for opportunities for true reconciliation, which we acknowledge will involve further action by, and change for, those in the dominant culture. Among our transgressions are the harmful stereotypes created for our entertainment.

We honor our Native siblings and seek to work for healing and justice that is truly "for all."

## Proposed Docket

10:05 am      Welcome      Moderator Hector Rivera-Velez

### Opening Prayer and Business

- Opening Prayer
- Declaration of Quorum
- Acknowledgement of Native Lands and Peoples
- Adoption of the Docket
- Omnibus Motion
- Welcome to First Time Commissioners, Corresponding Members, New Minister Members, Celebration of Ministry presenters, Visitors
- Moderators Remarks and Appointments of Parliamentarian and Tellers

10:15 am      Worship, Rev. John Wurster, preaching

11:15 am      Administration      RE Charlie Bradbury

Celebration of Ministry, Texas Presbyterian Foundation      Rev. Rick Young

Committee on Ministry      Rev. Karen Estes

Service of Retirement      Rev. Lynn Hargrove

Celebration of Ministry, Presbyterian Association of Musicians      Kelly Abraham

Nominating      RE George James

Greetings from our Synod Leader      Rev. Mitch Miller

Celebration of Ministry, Synod Youth Workshop      RE Leah McFadden

Disaster Planning      Rev. Charley Shurtz

Motion to Adjourn/Closing Prayer

12:30 pm      LUNCH

There is a Session Records Review scheduled after lunch.

The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant will be on ZOOM on Saturday, July 19, 2025.

## Table of Motions

### Omnibus Motion

To Approve the minutes from the November 16, 2024 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant.

### From the Administration Team

To approve the proposed 2025 budget for the Presbytery of New Covenant.

### From the Committee on Ministry

1. COM recommends and moves that Presbytery grant the following Honorable Retirement: Rev. Craig King effective January 31, 2025 and Rev. Mary Currie.
2. COM recommends and moves that the minutes be received and the following installation commission be dismissed with our thanks: Rev. Seth Saathoff at First, Conroe (March 15).
3. COM recommends the following to be Ordination Exam Readers from our Presbytery: Bill Hargrove, Kristi Vits, Pam Morgan, Debbie Battise-Kleinman.

### From the Nominating Committee

To approve those who have been nominated to serve on committees of the presbytery.

# PRESBYTERY WORSHIP

MARCH 22, 2025

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PRELUDE

GREETING

OPENING SENTENCES

Remember the story of our faith.

**We are the people God has delivered.**

Rejoice in the hope of our faith.

**God goes with us, step by step.**

Cling to the promise of our faith.

**Our God will not abandon us.**

HYMN, MORNING HAS BROKEN #664

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God,

in your tender love for all people

you sent Jesus to share in our life

and to suffer death upon the cross.

In your mercy help us learn from his obedience to your will

that we may know more fully the glory of his resurrection;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, forever and ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 23:33-43

SERMON – REV. DR. JOHN WURSTER

HYMN, COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING #475

OFFERING – CCSC (CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER) – SONG IS ABIDE

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### Invitation to the Lord's Table

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
let those who have no money come and eat.  
**God will satisfy our souls with a rich feast,  
and we will bless the Lord as long as we live.**

Isa. 55:1; Ps. 63:4-5

### Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

O God, Creator of our wilderness world,  
O God, Savior of the lost,  
O God, Comforter of the sick and suffering,  
we give you thanks for your everlasting might;  
we glorify you for your covenant of mercy.  
For forty days you cleansed the earth with the waters of the flood.  
**We praise you, O God.**  
For forty days you illumined Moses with the words of your law.  
**We praise you, O God.**  
For forty years you fed your people with manna from heaven.  
**We praise you, O God.**

You became truly human in Jesus our brother.  
For forty days, with fasting and prayer,  
he renounced the power of the devil.  
We extol his life. **Amen.**  
We lament his death. **Amen.**  
We celebrate his resurrection. **Amen.**

Transform us, O God, with your lively Spirit.  
Make this food into manna for our journey,  
the body and blood of your Son.  
**Save us, O God.**  
Grant us with the Ninevites forty days of repentance.  
**Save us, O God.**  
Teach us your words of wisdom and justice.  
**Save us, O God.**  
Renew the whole earth with baptismal grace.  
**Save us, O God.**  
At the last, lead all your pilgrim people  
through our deserts to your Easter garden.  
To you, O God, Creator, Savior, Comforter,

be our worship and praise, adoration and thanksgiving,  
now and forever. **Amen.**

As the children of God, let us pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.**

**Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;  
for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen.**

### **The Breaking of Bread and the Sharing of God's Gifts**

#### **Prayer after Communion**

We give you thanks and praise, O God,  
that you have fed us with your mercy  
and poured out your Spirit in this place.

**Continue to nourish and fill us each day,  
that we may live as your beloved people;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### **SONG, KING OF KINGS**

#### **CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Acknowledgements: Prayer of the Day and Great Thanksgiving from the *Book of Common Worship*, Presbyterian Church  
(USA)

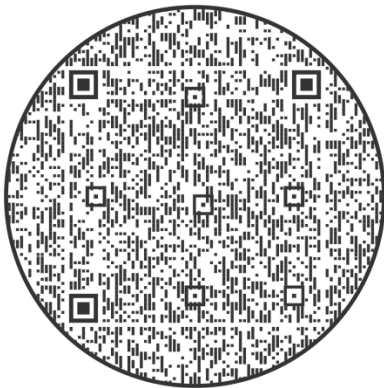
## Today's Offering - CCSC

Many of our congregations in the central part of Houston support the work of CCSC, the Christian Community Service Center (<https://ccschouston.org/>). This ministry was founded in 1977 by a group of six churches, including both Central Presbyterian and St. Andrew's. It is now a coalition of more than 40 congregations, including St. Andrew's, St. Paul, St. Philip, Mosaic Village, St. Luke's, and ChristChurch.

CCSC seeks to help Houston families to move forward through immediate basic needs relief and long term workforce development. They feed hunger, foster hope, and further success through their food pantry, clothing closet, utility bill and rental assistance, workforce development, and youth services. In 2024, they provided 11,482 nutritious five-day food packages, assisted 458 job seekers with skills, trained 178 entrepreneurs who participated in a residential housekeeping program, and 4,093 student received new school supplies and clothing.

You can donate through our website under the "Presbytery Meeting Offering" tab:

[https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco\\_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMKlg0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbYYQgidYztGbT9EdrKodrraXHubq5Z7ap5JVmPErc4ZeYHCKCZhesjGNQmZ5B-6dx3oXnCsieUfvboVDTFG9w\\_s=&ver=3](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMKlg0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbYYQgidYztGbT9EdrKodrraXHubq5Z7ap5JVmPErc4ZeYHCKCZhesjGNQmZ5B-6dx3oXnCsieUfvboVDTFG9w_s=&ver=3)



OR write a check made out to the Presbytery of New Covenant.

We thank you for your generosity!

# Morning Has Broken 664



1 Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black-bird has  
 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en, like the first  
 3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the



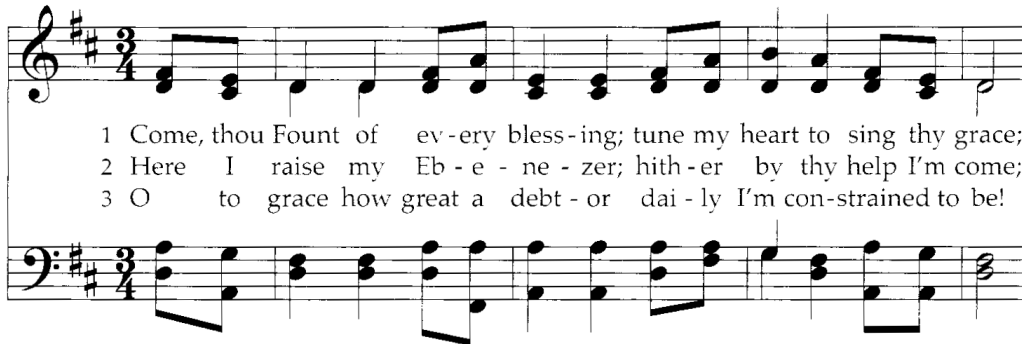
spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the  
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet-ness of the wet  
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion; praise ev - ery



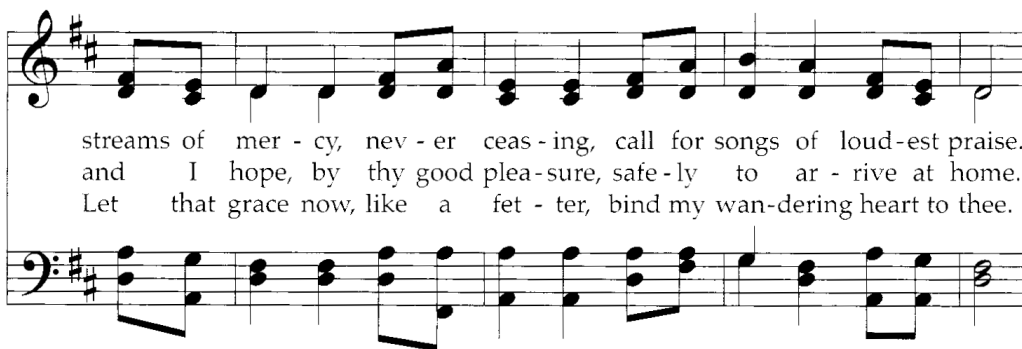
morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!  
 gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.  
 morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

This 20th-century text was created to provide words for this traditional tune named for a small village on the Isle of Mull, off the west coast of Scotland. Through repeated use of "new" and "first," each morning is treated as a re-creation of the promise of the original day.

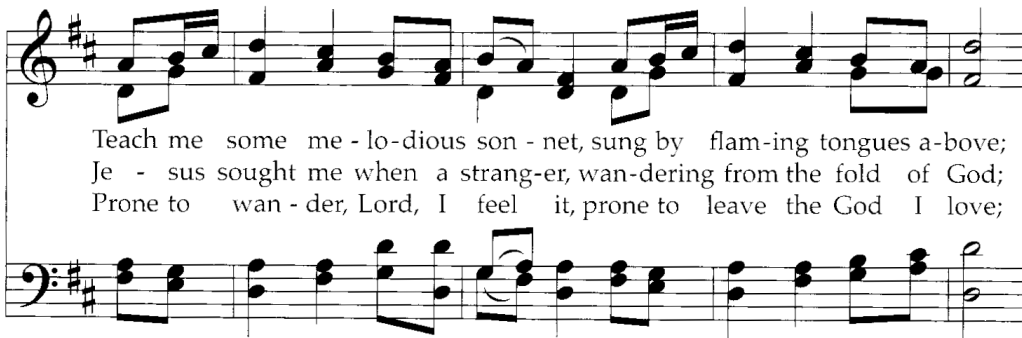
## Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 475



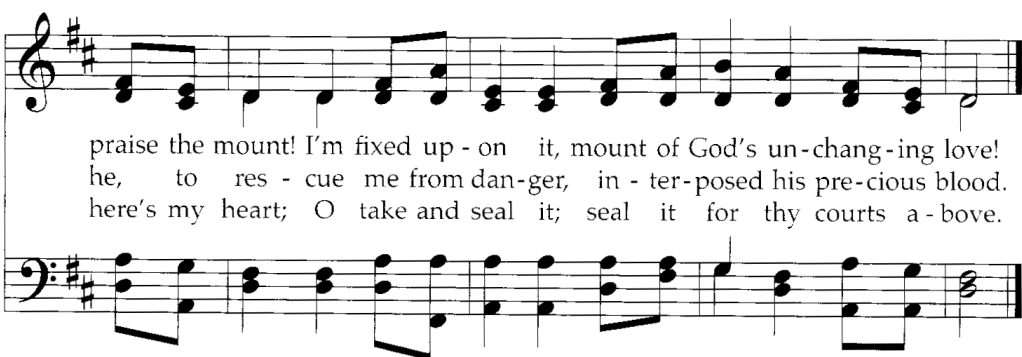
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;  
3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.  
and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.  
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;  
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;  
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!  
he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.  
here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Written for Pentecost by a British Baptist pastor, this text is full of biblical terms like "Ebenezer" (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for "a stone of help" set up to give thanks for God's assistance. The tune name honors hymnal compiler Asahel Nettleton, who probably did not compose it.

## "King Of Kings"

In the darkness, we were waiting  
Without hope without light  
Till from heaven You came running  
There was mercy in Your eyes  
To fulfill the law and prophets  
To a virgin came the Word  
From a throne of endless glory  
To a cradle in the dirt

Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, majesty  
Praise forever to the King of Kings

To reveal the kingdom coming  
And to reconcile the lost  
To redeem the whole creation  
You did not despise the cross  
For even in Your suffering  
You saw to the other side  
Knowing this was our salvation  
Jesus, for our sake You died

Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, majesty

Praise forever to the King of Kings

And the morning that You rose  
All of heaven held its breath  
Till that stone was moved for good  
For the Lamb had conquered death  
And the dead rose from their tombs  
And the angels stood in awe  
For the souls of all who'd come  
To the Father are restored

And the Church of Christ was born  
Then the Spirit lit the flame  
Now this gospel truth of old  
Shall not kneel, shall not faint  
By His blood and in His Name  
And in His freedom, I am free  
For the love of Jesus Christ  
Who has resurrected me  
Oh, praise

Praise the Father, praise the Son  
Praise the Spirit, three in one  
God of glory, majesty  
Praise forever to the King of Kings  
Praise forever to the King of Kings

## Preaching Today

Rev. John Wurster has been Pastor of St. Philip, Houston, since March 2012. He has also served as Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Kerrville, Texas, as well as in Ohio and Pennsylvania. John grew up in Wichita Falls. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity University where he graduated *summa cum laude* and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. His M.Div. studies were at Princeton Theological Seminary, and D.Min. from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Austin College.



John has authored two books which were published by CSS Press. He has contributed worship materials and essays to *Call to Worship*, the journal published by the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA). He has also written essays for the multi-volume *Connections* biblical commentary series.

John has served on the Boards of Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston, the Presbyterian Outlook Foundation, and the Presbyterian Pan American School, and Schreiner University. He is a member of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and has been involved with PAM conferences as a co-director and preacher. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member in homiletics at Austin Seminary.

John is married to Deborah Burks, formerly Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University.

## 2024 Necrology

### Minister Members

Charles Teykl - October 31

### Former Presbytery Staff

Helen Wolf - April 26

#### St. Andrew's, Beaumont

Eleanor Alexander - January 1

Marian Koch - January 7

Norma Ruth Murphy - March 12

Kenneth Barton Nichols - May 1

B.A. Mark Steinhagen - August 3

#### First, Brazoria

Wynelle Vollbaum - May 28

Earl Gragert - November 23

#### First, Conroe

H. Warren Taylor, III - February 8

Flem Storey Keathley, Jr. - March 5

#### Heritage, Cypress

Patricia Schoenfelder - December 2

#### Westminster, Galveston

Andrea Leveritt - August 16

#### Clear Lake, Houston

James (J.B.) Anderson - September 14

Art Wood - November 25

Pat Clauss - December 26

#### John Knox, Houston

Blythe Long - December 10

#### Oaks, Houston

Max Cunningham - August 30

JoAnn Frederick - September 6

#### Pines, Houston

Fred W. Kelly, Jr. - April 7

Ramona Riggs Buescher - June 6

Ann Smith - September 11

Eleanor Loose - December 14

#### Spring Branch, Houston

Mr. William (Web) Trevathan - May 4

Mr. Charles Fairchild - October 9

#### St. Andrew's, Houston

Percy Gentle - January 15

#### St. Luke's, Houston

Sam Davidson - February 9

#### St. Paul, Houston

Bruce Folts - May 13

Eileen Moore - September 20

#### St. Philip, Houston

William (Bill) Barclay Lee - January 16

Mary Ledele Bratton - February 12

Olivia Ford Munson - June 5

Dorothy Nell Blackwell - June 6

Velma Guy Tolbert - August 23

Susan K Estill - November 26

#### St. Thomas, Houston

Alice (Petie) Meyer - November 25

Dick Meyer - November 30

#### New Hope Presbyterian, Katy

Cindy Pfeifer-Hill - February 14

#### Westminster - Nacogdoches

Dr. Flamen David Ball, Jr

#### Trinity, Nederland

Kay Doucet - December 16

#### First, Orange

Josephine Crew - March 23

Bob Crew - January 16

**First, Pasadena**

Mary Durham - March 18  
Charlene Ann Wright - July 25  
Reginald (Rex) Knapik - October 20  
Pat Pesl - October 23  
Nola Bray - December 4

**First, Pearland**

Margie Nelson, April 4

**First - Rosenberg**

Dr. Richard A. Cannon - June 24

**First, Sugar Land**

Travis Boyd - January 9  
Mike Schofield - January 26

**Trawick, Trawick**

Melba Corley - February 3

**Waverly, Waverly**

Martha Browder - February 22

**Webster, Webster**

Grace Terrill Cook McMillan - January 21  
Johnny Jones - February 16  
John Robert Dewey - March 31  
Elaine Haycraft - April 4  
Cookie Leisenring - April 29  
James Doug McCann - August 20  
Ruth Leach - September 4  
Cleo Ward Jones - September 9  
Brenda Emery - October 16  
Kim Harano - November 25

*Church Anniversaries*

<i>First, Galveston</i>	<i>185 years</i>
<i>Bethel, West Columbia</i>	<i>185 years</i>
<i>First, Calvert</i>	<i>175 years</i>
<i>Waverly, Waverly</i>	<i>165 years</i>
<i>Westminster, Galveston</i>	<i>130 years</i>
<i>First, Trinity</i>	<i>115 years</i>
<i>St. Andrew's, Houston</i>	<i>80 years</i>
<i>First, Pasadena</i>	<i>80 years</i>
<i>St. Philip, Houston</i>	<i>75 years</i>
<i>St. Paul, Houston</i>	<i>70 years</i>
<i>Pioneer Beaumont</i>	<i>70 years</i>
<i>Clear Lake, Houston</i>	<i>60 years</i>
<i>First, Pearland</i>	<i>60 years</i>
<i>Pines, Houston</i>	<i>60 years</i>
<i>Heritage, Cypress</i>	<i>45 years</i>
<i>Korean Young Nak, Houston</i>	<i>45 years</i>
<i>Grand Lakes, Katy</i>	<i>20 years</i>
<i>Iglesia Latina, Houston</i>	<i>10 years</i>

## Administration Team

### **For action by the presbytery: To approve the proposed budget for the presbytery.**

We are grateful for our congregations and individuals who offer financial support for the work of the presbytery! We were blessed in 2024 to receive almost \$50,000 more in benevolent contributions from our congregations than we were expecting. \$20,000 of that came from a gift from a congregation who had sold their building. We also received a \$50,000 gift from an individual which we have invested, and plan to use these funds over the next 10 years to supplement our giving to the Synod of the Sun. Any per capita funds that we receive are passed through to the denomination. We are budgeting receipts of \$280,541 in benevolent giving to support our work (does not include the per capita pass through). We also receive rental income from a couple of church facilities, as well as interest income from our investment accounts. This gives a total of budgeted income of \$304,541 (does not include the per capita pass through).

In looking at our expenses, we offer support to the larger church at the Synod and General Assembly level. We have given \$10,000 to the Synod of the Sun for many years. This number in the budget remains the same, although as mentioned, we will be increasing our gift by \$5000 over the next 10 years from the generous gift received in 2024. This increase is not reflected in the budget since it is coming from a designated fund.

We have six organizations with whom we have a covenant partnership to which we offer \$3,000 each annually. These are CEDEPCA, CUPS, Prayers of the People (POP), Seafarers Ministry at PortHouston, and United Campus Ministries of Greater Houston and also at Aggieland. That totals \$18,000. Additionally there is \$10,000 to support our Outreach Grants. These are all dollars that support mission and ministry through our budget. The presbytery is blessed to be able to offer several other grant funding opportunities that are not included in the budget. These include the Vision Initiative, Lynn Johnson Social Justice, Elder Care, and Peacemaking Grants, as well as the Kelso Grants.

The biggest increase on the Administrative Expenses is for our very capable staff. We propose an increase of 5% in compensation in 2025 for five of our staff members. We are blessed with people that are dedicated to the work of the presbytery. They have worked hard to cut other expenses over the past few years, including elimination of a postage machine in favor of using stamps which have been purchased at a discount price.

Please note also, that several of the committees are funded through the earnings from designated funds which include the Committee on Ministry, Innovation and Vitality, and our Youth Ministries.

We recognize that this budget reflects a shortfall between the income and the expenses. This may be the first year that we will access the earnings from the sale of 1110 Lovett in 2019 and other properties to supplement the anticipated income. That amount is just over \$70,000.

Additionally, we would like to welcome Darcy Bryan-Wilson as the new Coordinator for the Committee on Ministry and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Darcy has been learning the position from Rev. Dr. Mary Currie who is retiring from that seat (dubbed the "Sharon Darden Seat of Power") and plans to continue to volunteer in the "Ministry of Obscure Paperwork" as needed. We thank Mary for her many years of service to the presbytery, including 4 years on the paid staff.

We met with Rev. Rick Young and John Furlow from the Texas Presbyterian Foundation at our March meeting to consult about how our investment funds are allocated. 97% of our investments are in their “Balanced Pool Fund” which has performed at a 7.5% increase over the past 10 years.

Kelso Grants Approved in 2025

Pines Presbyterian Church	\$5000
Heritage Presbyterian Church	\$5000
Brenham Presbyterian Church	\$2510
Pinecrest Presbyterian Church	\$5000
Community of the Servant Savior	\$5000

The “window” will be open from April 1 to April 30, 2025 to apply for the funds on the Universal Grant Application. Here is the amount available for each fund for this year’s grant cycle:

Vision Initiative	\$65,930
Lynn Johnson Social Justice	10,266
Outreach	10,000
Peacemaking	3,791
Eldercare	1,407

The members of the Administration Team are:

2025: Charlie Bradbury (Huntsville, First); Sharon Carey (Houston, St. Paul); Jim Fryfogle (Houston, Northwoods); Bill Parker (Houston, Clear Lake); Rev. Kathy Sebring (Dickinson, First); Rev. Kristy Vits (Bellaire, ChristChurch)

2026: Chris Friedersdorf (Atascocita); Martha Carol Giese (Waverly); Rev. John Judson (HR)

2027: Rev. Deborah Bogar (Houston, St. Paul); Rev. Brent Hampton (HR); Ann Hardy (Houston, St. John’s)

Presbytery of New Covenant Summary of Proposed 2025 Budget	Proposed 2024 Budget	Actual 2024	Proposed 2025 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>			
Benevolence Receipts			
From Churches	251,000	299,358	275,000
From Individuals	10,000	55,541	5,541
Per Capita for OGA	62,000	88,450	88,450
Total Benevolence Receipts	323,000	443,349	368,991
Other Income			
Interest Income	25,700	24,599	11,000
Misc. Income	4,800	6,347	-
Rental Income	6,000	5,100	13,000
Total Other Income	36,500	36,046	24,000
Total Revenues	359,500	479,395	392,991
<b>Expenses</b>			
Support of Larger Church			
Benevolences to Synod	10,000	10,000	10,000
Per Capita for OGA	62,000	88,450	88,450
Total Support of Larger Church	87,000	98,450	98,450
Ministry Expenses			
Communications (Data Base, Constant Contact, Web Site and Zoom)	3,650	1,956	6,850
Resource Center	500	500	500
Mission - Covenant Partners + Outreach Grants	28,000	28,000	28,000
Total Ministries Expenses	32,150	30,456	35,350
Administrative Expenses			
Finance - Insurance, Legal & Payroll Support	55,000	71,781	60,000
Ops-Building Maintenance (primarily rent)	26,000	24,401	24,401
Ops-Equipment (includes IT, software, and other service)	12,000	13,364	13,364
Audit Fees	10,000	10,000	10,500
Ops-Office Supply	400	566	750
PJC Expenses	5,000	5,612	5,612
Ops-Utilities - (Telephones, Internet and Google)	9,750	4,720	5,100
Ecclesiastical Affairs	-	112	112
Personnel Compensation (Committee approved a 5% increase 4-1-25)	240,000	231,704	251,313
Personnel Benefits	93,000	96,443	99,592
Professional Reimbursements	7,000	6,468	6,468
Total Administrative Expenses	458,150	465,171	477,212
Total Expenses	577,300	594,077	611,012
Total Revenues Minus Total Expenses	(217,800)	(114,682)	(218,021)
Other Sources Of Cash In To Balance Budget (Building Sales Proceeds)	-		
Funds to be Transferred from Operating Account to balance Budget	202,900	148,361	200,000
<b>Additional Financial Information</b>			
Investment Increase from 12-31-23 to 12-31-24		2,214,014	
Cash and Cash Equivalents as of 12-31-24			
Checking and Deposit Accounts and any Certificate of Deposit		399,541	
Investments with TPF		11,987,310	
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents		12,386,851	

Note: Committee on Ministries, Innovation and Vitality, Youth Ministries and various grants are funded outside the Budget

Revised 3/13/2025

## OPERATING CASH FLOW ANALYSIS

### OPERATING STATEMENT (2 Months Ended 2/28/2025)

Total Operating Revenues	\$59,894
Less Total Expenses before Depreciation	<u>(89,903)</u>
Operating Deficit	<b>(30,009)</b>

### FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FINANCE DEFICIT (see note below)

Investment income @12/31/2024	247,545*
*30% is available to finance the deficit, the same amount is reinvested	74,263.50 x 2 = 148,527
*40% is available for the General Council for mission and ministry	99,018

### LIQUID RESERVES @ 2/28/2025

#### Balance Sheet @ 2/28/2025

Total reserves: cash & liquid investments	\$12,337,614
Less Restricted funds @ 2/28/2025	(830,190)
Total Unrestricted Reserves @ 2/28/2025	\$11,507,424

*NOTE: The "funds available to finance deficit" come from the proceeds from the sale of our former office building at 1110 Lovett. In September, 2021, the Finance Committee recommended to the General Council that disbursements from the income earned on these invested funds be distributed as follows:*

*40% to be distributed by General Council for mission and ministry*

*30% to be used for PNC operations if there is a deficit. If there is no deficit, then the funds are carried forward to be used in the future if necessary.*

*30% to be reinvested into the "Building Fund" at Texas Presbyterian Foundation*

*\*None of these funds have been used thus far in 2025.*

*In September of 2023, a motion was approved to set up a GC Discretionary Spending Fund which would include:*

- 1. Funds generated by the earnings (interest and dividends) and realized capital gains (new of realized capital losses) generated by the "Building Sales Proceeds and Unrestricted Reserve funds at Texas Presbyterian Foundation (TPF)."*
- 2. 20% of all monies that are realized from the sale of PNC properties.*
- 3. Designated donations.*

*Further move that the remaining 80% of monies that are realized from the sale of PNC properties be placed in the Building Sales Proceeds account at TPF.*

*When a congregation chooses to dissolve, their property reverts to the presbytery under the trust clause. We have been able to lease some of these properties so that they are still being used for the purposes of worship and mission in those communities. When there is no group interested in leasing, then the property is sold.*

# Presbytery of New Covenant Universal Grant Application (2025)

*Please type your application.*

Grant Source: Please read the purpose/qualifications of the grant carefully, then select only one of the 5 grant categories below by placing an X in the box. Fill out the grant application form completely and accurately. Use N/A or none in those blanks that do not apply to your project. An applicant may apply for multiple grants, but **separate forms are required for each project request**. A grant request must be approved by the applicant's session or governing board prior to submission.

- Vision Initiative: Priority is given to projects that increase the overall membership of New Covenant Presbytery. They may be the result of new church development, redevelopment of established churches, general outreach to unchurched individuals or other approaches consistent with the mission of the Presbytery.  
*PLEASE NOTE: Vision Initiative grant applicants will generally be expected to raise at least half the cost of the grant-supported activity, with grant funds providing the balance.* Grant Funds available: \$65,930
- Lynn Johnson Social Justice: Funds are to be used for social justice issues, particularly for issues concerning equality and inclusion of all persons regardless of sexual orientation. Maximum grant is \$2000. Grant Funds available: \$10,266
- Outreach: Projects should passionately engage and support local and global mission efforts in order to be God's redemption to a hurting world. These projects should be aimed at helping people outside the applicant's congregation. Maximum grant is \$2000. Grant Funds available: \$10,000
- Peacemaking: Peacemaking activity can take varied forms, but generally seeks to bring people of diverse races, cultures, ethnicities, or religions closer together. Projects might include environmental concerns, arms control, and gun safety. Maximum grant is \$2000. Grant Funds available: \$3790.97
- Elder Care: Projects should provide care for the elderly and senior citizens. Maximum grant is \$1000. Grant Funds available: \$1406.82

## Guidelines

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Relationship to Presbytery: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address of Principal Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone of Principal Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost of Project: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Grant for which you are applying: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

What are the other sources of funding? \_\_\_\_\_

*(For Vision Initiative Grants, certification of other funding sources may be required.)*

Date of approval by Session or Board: \_\_\_\_\_

When are the funds needed to implement the project? \_\_\_\_\_

Has this organization applied for a grant in the past? \_\_\_\_ Which grant and when? \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW IN A SEPARATE DOCUMENT**

1. General Description of Activity for Grant including:
  - a. a description of the project
  - b. project budget. This should be for the total project, broken down with as much detail as possible
  - c. the target population to be reached
  - d. the desired outcome - please provide measurable outcomes if possible
  - e. names of those who will be involved in administering or otherwise carrying out the work of the project or program.
  
2. Explain how the project meets the grant guidelines for the grant source selected on page one.
  
3. Explain how the project fits with the Mission and Vision of the Presbytery of New Covenant:

Mission Statement: Seeking God by helping the Body of Christ foster faith, hope, love and witness.

Vision Statement: Through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the Presbytery of New Covenant seeks to connect the body of Christ by facilitating relationships between individuals and missions to share God's love throughout creation.

Tagline: Receive love. Share love. Repeat.
  
4. If the project seeks funding for construction of permanent facilities at the applicant organization's facility (e.g. church), how will these facilities be used for other ongoing mission and outreach operations of the organization?
  
5. How will the success of the project be measured (please be as quantitative as possible)?

Printed Name of Authorized Signer:

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Signature and Date:

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Date sent:

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*Please confirm that your application has been received.*

**APPLICATIONS WILL BE RECEIVED FROM APRIL 1 THROUGH APRIL 30. PLEASE SEND ELECTRONICALLY TO CHARLES LEIBOLD ([cleibold@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:cleibold@pbyofnewcovenant.org)) AND LYNN HARGROVE ([lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:lhargrove@pbyofnewcovenant.org))**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PROJECT SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 30 OF THE FOLLOWING CALENDAR YEAR. IF THE PROJECT IS NOT COMPLETED BY THE DEADLINE, PLEASE SUBMIT AN INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT. ANY FUNDS NOT USED FOR THE PURPOSE DESCRIBED IN THE APPLICATION SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE PRESBYTERY. PROJECT COMPLETION REPORTS REGARDING THE USE OF THE GRANT FUNDS ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 15 OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR. REPORTS SHOULD BE SENT TO: CHARLES LEIBOLD ([cleibold@pbyofnewcovenant.org](mailto:cleibold@pbyofnewcovenant.org))**

*REVISED MARCH 17, 2025*

Committee on Ministry (COM)  
Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

For Information

2025 IRS Mileage Rate is now \$.70 per mile

Heritage Presbyterian has a new address: 14139 Huffmeister Rd, Cypress, TX 77429

For Action by the Presbytery:

4. COM recommends and moves that Presbytery grant the following Honorable Retirement: Rev. Craig King effective January 31, 2025 and Rev. Mary Currie.
5. COM recommends and moves that the minutes be received and the following installation commission be dismissed with our thanks: Rev. Seth Saathoff at First, Conroe (March 15).
6. COM recommends the following to be Ordination Exam Readers from our Presbytery: Bill Hargrove, Kristi Vits, Pam Morgan, Debbie Battise-Kleinman.

COM Actions Taken on Behalf of the Presbytery

I. New Minister Members of Presbytery

1. Racquel Tomacruz is coming from Farmington Presbyterian Church in Farmington, MO, Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery and will begin her ministry at St. Paul's in Needville full time effective May 1.

Salary	\$28,350
Housing	27,000
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	3000
Books, Professional Expenses	600
Board of Pensions	14.392
Study Leave Allowance	2 weeks
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks

2. JonSuk Baek will begin his ministry at Young Nak, Houston effective April 1, 2025. He is coming from Korean First Presbyterian in Oklahoma City, Indian Nations Presbytery.

Salary	\$27,000
Housing	25,000
Board of Pensions	18,000
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	N/A
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	20,000

II. New Calls and Contracts

First, Tomball and Craig King (1/2 time Stated Supply), effective February 1, 2025

Salary	\$32,000
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate (as vouchered)	2,000
Social Security offset up to 7.65%	3,827
Board of Pensions (NA—retired)	N/A
Study Leave Allowance	200
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks

III. Terms of Compensation Approved (November 2024 - March 14)

a. Renewals with no changes in Terms of Call:

Stated supply contract between Lloyd Crosby and Pioneer, Beaumont: 10 hours week beginning 1-01-2025

Maury Millican and Trawick renewed as Temporary Stated Supply for a one year term beginning 01-01-2025

b. Renewals with changes in Terms of Call

First, Angleton and Michael Gable, Full Time effective 01-01-2025

Salary	\$20,046
Housing	46,332
Other Allowances, Insurance Premiums, etc not paid through BOP	1,637
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	3,000
Books, Professional Expenses	1,300
Board of Pensions	29,246
Study Leave Allowance	1,700
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	5,203

Presbyterian Church of the Redeemer, Houston (meets in Bellaire) and Ebenezer Boateng

Salary	\$28,000
Housing	12,000
Board of Pensions	1,596
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	N/A

First, Sugarland and Fred Seay, Full Time effective 01-01-2025

Salary	\$47,540
Housing	34,712
Other Direct Compensation	4,055
Board of Pensions	38,096
Study Leave Allowance	2,080
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks

Westminster, Nacogdoches and Kallie Pitcock, Full Time effective 01-01-2025

Salary	\$46,110
Housing	20,000
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	.70/mile
Books, Professional Expenses	7,525
Board of Pensions	17,189
Study Leave Allowance	2,175
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Other paid group insurance (dental)	446+

St. John's, Houston and Jon Burnham, Full time effective 01-01-2025

Salary	\$49,256
Housing	39,138
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	683
Books, Professional Expenses	1,155
Board of Pensions	35,271
Study Leave Allowance	1,600
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Other allowances or insurance payments	2,045
Matching employer contributions to PCUSA Retirement Savings	5,160
Reimbursement of (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	6,919

Woodforest, Houston and Karen Estes, 50% of full time, April 1, 2025

Salary	\$6,340
Housing	24,000
Other group insurance	3,888
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	.70/mile
Books, Professional Expenses	1,000
Board of Pensions	9,322
Study Leave Allowance	1,450
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	N/A

Faith, Baytown and Isabel Rivera-Velez stated supply/ part time (19 hours/wk) effective July 1, 2024

Salary	\$13,443
Housing	13,443
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	530
Books, Professional Expenses	
Board of Pensions	n/a
Study Leave Allowance	2654

Paid Medical Family Leave	n/a
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	3 weeks
Vacation	5 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	N/A

Spring Branch, Houston and Mark Plunkett, Full Time installed effective February 1, 2025

Salary	\$24,000
Housing	37,000
Other Allowances, Insurance Premiums, etc not paid through BOP	997
Travel Reimbursement @ IRS Rate	1,200
Books, Professional Expenses	1,800
Board of Pensions	25,199
Study Leave Allowance	1,450
Paid Medical Family Leave	0
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	21,299

Northwoods, Houston and Paul Nazarian, Full time installed effective January 1, 2025

Salary	\$90,660
Housing	42,410
Deferred Compensation	9,600
Board of Pensions	FULL
Study Leave Allowance	2,900
Paid Medical Family Leave	12 weeks
Study Leave (plus clergy retreat if offered)	2 weeks
Vacation	4 weeks
Reimbursement of Self Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax obligation up to 7.65%	5,800

New Hope, Katy and Cindy Mood as Full Time Interim effective 02-09-2025

Salary	\$25,680
Housing	35,000
Books, Professional Expenses	1,000
Board of Pensions	6,532
Study Leave Allowance	1,450
Vacation	4 wks
Reimbursement of SECA tax obligation up to 7.65%	4,642

Dismissals, moves and transfers:

The call between Korean Young Nak and Jun Ho Kim was dissolved effective December 31, 2024.

A Pastor Nominating Committee was elected at the congregational meeting to dissolve the call which was affirmed by COM although it was out of the order of the search for a new pastor.

Actions and concerns from the January Meeting:

COM appointed TE Margaret Desmond and RE Bob Patterson as liaisons to provide oversight of Rev Peter Woo Ram Chung of Korean Central Presbyterian Church, Houston to fulfill the conditions of Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-1.

Actions and concerns from the February Meeting: None

Actions and concerns from the March Meeting:

Rev. Steve Kerr, honorably retired, died on February 13, 2025, in Beaumont.  
Request for communion training for Ruling Elders at First, Huntsville.

Statements of Faith: New Ministers

JongSuk Baek

I believe that God is the Creator. I believe that God created the entire world with good intentions. In God's work of creation as recorded in Genesis 1, God declared that it was "very good." This truth becomes the goal of life as a responsible Christian and is also the reason I was called into pastoral ministry. I believe that I have been called to help people return to God according to the beautiful and good intention of creation, to teach them with God's Word, to encourage, comfort, and love them.

I believe the Bible is the clearest and infallible Word of God. I also believe that the Bible, given to us by God, is the Word of God recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As stated in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." As a person with limitations, I cannot fully know everything about God. I only partially understand what God has revealed through the Bible when He grants spiritual insight by grace. Therefore, I believe that humility before the Word is essential, as I am never greater than God or the Church He has given. I live a life of reading the Word and praying, seeking God's grace to reveal His holy will to me. Similarly, I believe it is God's calling for me to help all the church members hear and understand the Word of God given through the Bible.

I am a sinner. As Ephesians 2:3 says, "All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath." Like the Apostle Paul confessed, there is a battle between good and evil within me (Romans 7:22-23). However, I believe that even though the wages of sin is death, I have been justified by grace through Jesus Christ. This truth is a profound grace to me. Therefore, I pray daily, obey the Word, and seek to follow the good things God desires.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the only way, the truth, and the life. All humanity has sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23) and is spiritually dead. In this desperate state, humans have no means or ability to save themselves. However, I believe that salvation is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For this reason, I believe that Jesus Christ must be the center of my life and the focus of all ministry.

Racquel Tomacruz

I believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit --- who are co-equal and almighty. I believe in Jesus Christ's deity, the virgin birth, and Jesus' sinless life on earth. I believe in salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ, whose finished work in Calvary is the redemptive sacrifice for sins (e.g. Romans 10:8-11; John 3:16; Hebrews 9:26-28; etc.). I believe in the Holy Spirit who draws people to God, convicting, sanctifying, indwelling the believer, and giving spiritual growth. I believe the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is the guide to matters of salvation, faith, and conduct. I believe in teaching and obeying all the principles and commands of God in the Bible (e.g. the Great

Commission, Matthew 28:18- 20). I believe that Christians are to grow in service and love to other people, grow in obedience and love to God, and live out their faith in all aspects of earthly life.

### Honorably Retiring Life Stories

#### Mary Currie

One day in the spring of 1975, I spent an anxious day at St Andrews Presbyterian Church waiting for my place on the presbytery agenda: I was to speak about feeling called to ministry and ask to become a candidate under care of Brazos Presbytery. Sharon Darden had been working for the presbytery for about 6 years. Sam Lanham had been pastor of St Philip (where I was a member) for about 4 years. And the big debate concerned changing the retirement age for ministers. Ordained in 1979, my preacher retirement (at the end of 2020) listed the churches I've served in Texas and Missouri-but Lynn Hargrove asked me to write of retirement from presbytery work:

For most of the years I've volunteered at the presbytery office, I've done what I call the ministry of obscure paperwork (that's MOP in proper Presbyterian initials). Obscure stuff that gets all the minister transfer things done: new calls and addresses to GA, synod and presbyteries, seminaries and so forth. Obscure stuff like recording 25+ years of the minister salaries in this presbytery so it only takes about 5 minutes to get an answer how a proposed salary (either full time or part time) compares to the minimum terms or what other similar churches are doing. Obscure stuff like the minister and church and ministry candidates files.

So now you have paid me for a few years to sit in the Sharon Darden seat of power in an office honoring Sam Lanham. It has given the presbytery time to look at one area of staffing:

Was it needed? Could it be done with part time hours? What changes needed to be made?

Today I am older than the retirement age they were debating in 1975. It has been a joy to serve you, but it has grown physically harder to MOP each year, and it's time to retire. Thank you for the chance to walk with you in ministry through these years!

#### Craig King

Craig King grew up in a family of 7 in Galveston, Texas. He received his Master of Divinity degree at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2003. Craig then served as a supply pastor for a small church in Springfield, Missouri for one year, followed by a call to serve 2 small, yoked churches in Missouri for 4 ½ years. Following his time in Missouri, he has served churches in Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma During his time with the Presbyterian Church (USA), Craig has served 3 presbyteries in a variety of positions, including moderator of the Committee on Ministry in the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, and moderator of Calls & Contracts in Presbytery of New Covenant.

Craig and his high school sweetheart Catherine have been married for 49 years. They have 2 children: Meredith (nee King) Carter, a charge nurse at Memorial Hermann in Katy, and Craig, Jr. (Steven), an EMT in Lufkin. They have 3 grandchildren: Soren (13), Camille (10), and Dani (7).

# Service of Recognition for Church Professionals Upon Retirement

Introduction of the Retiree by the General Presbyter

Scriptural Sentences – I Corinthians 12:4-11

Peterson – “God’s various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God’s Spirit. God’s various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God’s Spirit. God’s various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone get in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the Spirit of God. God decides who gets what, and when.”

Recognition of Retiree’s Service to the Church

Presentation of the Official Retirement Certificate

Brief statement by person retiring

Prayer of thanksgiving for the retiree’s ministry (remembering the vows taken upon ordination G-14.0405b) – General Presbyter

O Lord, we thank you for the trust in Jesus Christ \_\_\_\_\_ has exhibited.

We thank you that throughout *his/her* ministry \_\_\_\_\_ has accepted the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God’s Word.

We are grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ has sincerely received and adopted the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and that *he/she* has been instructed and led by those confessions as he led the people of God.

We lift up our hearts in gratitude for this Minister of the Word and Sacrament who has lived in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and has been continually guided by our confessions.

We thank you for *his/her* willingness to be governed by our church's polity, and to abide by its discipline. We are grateful that *he/she* has been a friend among *his/her* colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit.

We thank you that in *his/her* own life *he/she* has sought to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world.

We are grateful that *he/she* has fulfilled *his/her* promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

We thank you that \_\_\_\_\_ has served your people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

O God, we are profoundly grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ has been a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people. Finally, Lord, we are appreciative that \_\_\_\_\_ has been active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the church; and in *his/her* ministry has shown the love and justice of Jesus Christ.

## General Council

The General Council of the presbytery exists to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more faithful participants in the mission of Christ. As part of that responsibility and in partnership with the Innovation and Vitality Committee, General Council is exploring ways for the presbytery to be present with and to support individual congregations. At the request of members of one of the judicial commissions, the General Council has tasked the Administrative Committee to examine the current policy for presbytery staff and volunteer adults working with youth and to make recommendations for updating it. An additional task force is exploring affordable options for churches to insure their buildings.

Bonnie Keith  
Moderator of General Council

## Innovation and Vitality

Newly formed in 2024 after combining the former committees of Church Evangelism and Church Growth with Church Resources, our committee began looking at ways to innovate and re-energize our congregations. In a changing world culture, our relevance to our communities becomes essential as we find paths to share the Gospel of Christ Jesus with humanity. Vision becomes essential for congregations as a means of inspiration for being used by our Lord as his hands and feet.

To help us with cultivating relevance, vision and inspiration, we reached out to Leadconnects, a faith-based organization that assists congregations in thoughtful reflection that leads to action. Each congregation in our Presbytery has been invited to enter into a period of commitment with Leadconnects as a facilitator to assist with this quest. Two congregations began this journey in 2024 and are on their way to finding a pathway that brings purpose and passion to their ministry. This effort is underwritten by the Presbytery and costs nothing but time, energy, and love to those who partake.

Additionally, we held a Fall Gathering inviting congregations to come and share our mission outreach experiences with one another. It was a time of connection and excitement as we discovered commonalities as well as new ideas in our shared commitment to Christ Jesus. Each person left the gathering motivated to continue to develop ways in which their ministry is relevant to our communities and ways to grow their ministries.

As we move into 2025, it is our desire to continue to extend invitations to congregations to spend time cultivating vision and inspiration with LeadConnects as the facilitator. There is room for more congregations to join in this journey, all underwritten by the Presbytery. We offered an introductory workshop with LeadConnects this morning before our meeting. We also are in the planning stages for a Spring Gathering (May 3) and Fall Gathering (in October) to further enhance collaboration with one another. Be looking for the announcements concerning these events. Together we can make a difference and bring hope to this dark world.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Parsons  
Moderator of Innovation and Vitality Committee

## Nominating Committee

For action by the Presbytery: to elect the following nominees for service on presbytery committees.

Committee on Ministry – 2027 – Rev. Helen DeLeon

Committee on Representation – 2027 – Rev. Carol Tompkins

Rev. Ted Foote, Moderator of Nominating Committee

## Synod of the Sun Commissioner's Report

The 2025 Spring Synod Assembly was held on Monday and Tuesday, February 24 and 25 at the Presbyterian Mission Center in Irving, TX. Rev. Lynn Hargrove, Rev. Ed Wolf and Leah McFadden represented the Presbytery of New Covenant.

Some of the highlights of the meeting were:

Synod Leader Mitch Miller conducted a commissioner orientation session. Committee assignments were finalized. The standing committees met and began the work of 2025.

Rev. Dr. Michelle Junkin of Big Faith Resources at Westminster Presbyterian Church gave a presentation on providing inclusive worship experiences for neurodiverse communities. Big Faith develops innovative resources that equip churches for an ever-changing neurodiverse landscape. They offer free sensory-friendly materials, training workshops, and shared traveling equipment, needed for inclusive worship experiences (<https://bigfaithresources.com>)

The assembly entered into a new Covenant Agreement with New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children (NOROC). Rev. Kristen Harris gave a presentation about the organization and its work. The website is ([noroc.org](http://noroc.org)). The Covenant Agreement with Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS) was renewed. Laura Fleming, Director of Development gave an update on the work of PCHAS. For more information, see ([pchas.org](http://pchas.org)). Bill Rutherford provided a report on Covenant Partner, Pan American School ([ppas.org](http://ppas.org)) which continues to thrive despite challenges, and discussed their plans for increased enrollment and competition success.

The assembly reviewed and approved the 2025 budget, presented by Treasurer Bill Wiles. The Synod Leader reported on key activities and the synod's finances. He reiterated his plan to attend presbytery meetings highlighting the work and relationship to Synod of the Sun. Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell gave a report on the Synod Partnership for Disaster Response (SPDR), highlighting the organization's growth and ongoing disaster relief efforts, with a motion passed to extend its covenant agreement for another five years. Thomas Riggs shared updates on the Communication Services Plan, which has expanded significantly since its inception.

Various committee reports were presented. Empowering Committee members Carlos Baladez and Leah McFadden reported on the work of Synod of the Sun networks, Hispanic Ministries Mission Network (HMMN) and Synod Youth Workshop (SYW), as well as efforts to network border ministry organizations. Rev. Polly Williams reported on Grants & Scholarships commitments for 2025.

Leah McFadden

## Stated Clerk for Administrative Process

Thank you to all of the clerks and pastors who helped to complete the Annual Statistical Report. 81 of 83 reports were submitted which represents 97.5%. Reports were not received from First Lao, Houston or Thien An, Houston. The presbytery has 82 congregations to begin 2025.

The 2023 and 2024 minutes from the Presbytery of New Covenant were reviewed at a gathering of Stated Clerks in Irving. The letter of approval from the Synod has not been received. We anticipate that everything was in compliance with the guidelines.

The minutes from Shiro Presbyterian Church were reviewed and there were no exceptions. Session Records Reviews are held after in person presbytery meetings, and in regional gatherings in the fall. Minutes can be submitted electronically for review, also.

Supplemental and Members of Session Reports have been received from many of our congregations. This information assists us to update our online database.

## Stated Clerk for Judicial Process

1. Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-01: The Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) met on December 9, 2024 to review the Alternative Resolution that was prepared and agreed upon by the Investigating Committee and the Accused. The Alternative Resolution includes a Book of Order D-9.0104 Rebuke with Supervised Rehabilitation. The PJC issued an order on January 3, 2025 stating its acceptance of the Alternative Resolution and setting the commencement of the censure to begin on January 14, 2025. The Committee on Ministry has assigned two of its members to supervise the rehabilitation of the accused during the 12-month period of his censure to assure the completion of the requirements of his rehabilitation. The Censure will be read into the minutes of the presbytery at its March 22, 2024 stated meeting.
2. Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-02: Since Aaron Seay had renounced jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) following the Investigating Committee filing charges on October 15, 2024, a summary of those charges were read into the minutes at the November 16, 2024 stated meeting of the presbytery. The Investigating Committee is in the process of compiling and organizing all of the transcripts of testimony given by the parties and witnesses, the correspondence, and the other supporting documentation to preserve the record of this unresolved case.



Stated Meeting  
Presbytery of New Covenant  
November 16, 2024

We met in the Sanctuary of the historic First Presbyterian Church in Galveston. Moderator Bonnie Keith offered words of welcome and an opening prayer @ 10:09 am. A quorum was declared by Stated Clerk for Administrative Process, Rev. Lynn Hargrove. The Acknowledgement of Native Lands and Peoples was read by Bonnie Keith. The proposed docket was approved with the addition of a report from the Stated Clerk for Judicial Process. The Omnibus Motion was approved. The docket was approved as amended to lift out 24-M from the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution. Rev. Becky Downs, Pastor of the host congregation, welcomed commissioners and visitors to the church.

First time commissioners were welcomed with applause; corresponding members were Rev. Mitch Miller, Leader of the Synod of the Sun, and Rev. John Nelsen from the Tres Rios Border Foundation; New minister members were introduced and signed the “Book of Life” – Jolene Currie, Seth Saathoff, Andy Blair, Janell Blair.

Parliamentarian – John Lemen was appointed to be the Parliamentarian. Those appointed to be tellers were RE Jim Keith (Pasadena, First), RE Kathleen Duncan (LaPorte, St. James), RE Laura Phipps, and ???

Worship was led by a team of people with Mark Downs preaching. We celebrated communion. The offering was designated for the Montreat Conference Center after the devastation from Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina. Funds were given online, and by cash and check.

Committee on Ministry: Rev. Karen Estes, Moderator of the COM, presented two motions which were both approved. The first was for Rev. Tom Sharon to be granted status as Honorably Retired. The second was to approve the Minimum Terms of Call for 2025.

A service of recognition of retirement was held for both Tom Sharon and David Green. Both offered remarks about their ministries.

Celebration of Ministry was given by Rev. John Nelsen with Tres Rios Border Foundation (El Paso) highlighting issues along the border with immigration. He invited people to come to a Border Encounter with Abara.

Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee: Rev. Andy Gans presented the business items.

1. To approve the parity plan for 2025. Was approved
2. To approve amendment 24-A - regarding F-1.0403 – discussion was held with commissioners speaking both for and against the amendment. A voice vote was not conclusive so a written ballot was taken. Vote totals were 78 in favor, 36 against, 7 abstained. The motion carried.
3. To approve amendment 24-C – regarding G.20401b – discussion was held with commissioners speaking both for and against the amendment. A written ballot was taken. 45 for, 71 against, 5 abstentions.
4. To approve amendment 24-M – Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing on Ministries – discussion was held speaking both for and against. A voice vote was in favor.

While the ballots were being counted, we heard greetings from Rev. Mitch Miller, the newly installed leader for the Synod of the Sun. Mitch described his work across the 11 presbyteries in the 4 states of Arkansas, Louisiana,

Oklahoma and Texas and across the geographic bounds. He talked about opportunities with the Synod Partnership for Disaster Recovery.

Andy Gans offered a blessing for the meal. We will reconvene at 1:25 after lunch.

Moderator Bonnie Keith called us back to order at 1:30. She invited RE John Lemen, Stated Clerk for Judicial Process, to give a report. The investigating committee members, Rev. Cheryl Gans, Rev. Mark Downs, Rev. Steve Oglesbee, read the charges against Aaron Seay for sexual misconduct. Other committee members were RE Shelley Hernandez and RE Karen Spivey. Aaron renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The report follows these minutes. Questions were asked about the process and our responsibilities. Rev. Lynn Hargrove offered a prayer for Aaron and the victims.

GP + SC4AP Rev. Lynn Hargrove offered a “State of the Presbytery” address which was organized around the hymn, “Blest Be the Tie that Binds.”

General Council: Rev. Becky Downs offered the Anti-Harrassment/Racism Policy for approval. It passed by a voice vote.

Innovation and Vitality: RE Lynne Parsons Austin explained how the committee was formed, and the excitement for their work. She shared about the recent “Day of Celebration of Ministry and Mission” which was held at St. John’s. She invited congregational leaders to consider joining a cohort for Strategic Planning working with LEADConnects. This work will be underwritten by the presbytery as an investment in our congregations.

Nominating Committee: RE George James offered the report, with the additional of RE Marla Blanke (Orange, First) to serve in the class of 2027 on the General Council. The slate was elected.

Rev. Hector Rivera-Velez was installed as the Moderator of the Presbytery for 2025. Bonnie Keith bestowed the symbols of the office to Hector. She was applauded for her service as Moderator in 2024.

Hector closed the meeting with prayer and we adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynn R. Hargrove*

Faithful Scribe

**Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-02 PC(USA) Presbytery of New Covenant  
vs.  
Aaron Seay**

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES\***

Whereas we, the Investigating Committee, have concluded our investigation in accordance with the Book of Order's Rules of Discipline and in accordance with our mutually agreed upon process.

And

Whereas, we, the Investigating Committee, have determined that there are probable grounds to believe offenses were committed.

And

Whereas, we, the Investigating Committee, have determined that the offenses can be reasonably proven.

We, the Investigating Committee, find that Aaron Seay, engaged in behavior that we, the Investigating Committee, have determined violates the ethical and moral obligations set forth in Scripture, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Constitution, as well as the Presbyterian Church USA's Standards of Ethical Conduct.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) charges you, Aaron Seay, the Former Coordinator of Youth Ministry for the Presbytery of New Covenant and member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the following:

**A. SEXUAL ABUSE CHARGES**

You, Aaron Seay, did commit offense of sexual abuse on several occasions as follows:

1. On or about the 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> days of June 2021, you were alone with Victim One in a vehicle while traveling to a Pre-Synod Youth Workshop meeting in Denton, Texas and while traveling from a Pre-Synod Youth Workshop meeting in Denton to your respective homes. You knew Victim One had recently turned 18. Through your position with Presbytery, you knew Victim One as a 16-year-old participant in Youth activities and as a 17-year-old volunteer in Youth leadership positions. As an 18-year-old, Victim One was still considered to be a Youth by Synod rules. During the trip on June 3, 2021, Victim One confided with you that she had been a rape victim, and you discussed with Victim One your use of drugs (including cocaine) and alcohol and your sexual experiences while at Texas State University.
2. On or about July 2 through 8, 2021, you had sexual relations with Victim One prior to and during the Junior High Jubilee Conference at Mo Ranch. This included sexual intercourse in a Mo Ranch hotel

room. On these occasions, you drank alcohol to intoxication in the presence of Victim One and you coerced the victim to consume alcohol and become intoxicated. You also disclosed personal information to Victim One regarding your use of drugs and alcohol and promoted said use.

3. On or about July 9, 2021, you, had sexual intercourse with Victim One during the weekend of the San Marcos college party. You also drank alcohol to intoxication in the presence of Victim One and coerced the victim to consume alcohol to intoxication at the party.
4. Following July 8, 2021, through June 19, 2023, you continued your sexual relationship with Victim One, repeatedly discouraging her from ending the relationship, and encouraged Victim One to lie to third persons about the fact that you actually began the sexual relationship with Victim One during the Junior High Jubilee Conference at Mo Ranch.

The witness to the above offenses is Victim One.

5. During May of 2022 (the 2021-2022 Program Year of PYCC), you committed the offense of sexual abuse of Victim Two, whom you knew had recently turned 18. You were alone with her at the New Covenant Presbytery office and asked the victim inappropriate personal questions about her prior romantic relationships, convinced her to play a sexual game and remove her shirt, and encouraged her to lie down on the floor and remove her bra.

The witness to this offense is Victim Two, who made outcry to third-party witnesses.

**Each of the above offenses violated:**

- the ethical and moral obligations set forth in Scripture;
- the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Constitution, Section D7.0901: *“Sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position; and,*
- the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), Section I, Statements 2, 4, and 6; Section II, Statements 2 through 5; the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), Section I, Statements 1 through and 4; the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), and Section II, Statements 1 through 4, and 11.

**B. CHARGES RELATED TO LYING:**

You, Aaron Seay, committed the offense of lying on several occasions as follows:

6. Beginning September 9, 2021, and thereafter, you lied to witnesses by telling them that you began a dating relationship during the Junior High Jubilee Conference at Mo-Ranch, and that before that

event, your relationship was a friendly one only; and you hid the truth of your sexual relationship with Victim One during the Junior High Jubilee Conference at Mo Ranch.

There are witnesses to this offense.

7. On October 6, 2021, you lied to the Friends of Northwoods Presbyterian Church when you authored and published a letter to same in which you mischaracterized the nature of your sexual relationship with Victim One during the Junior High Jubilee Conference at Mo Ranch as a friendly one only and you hid the fact that you had sexual relations with Victim One during the conference.

There is a witness and documentation regarding this offense.

**The above offense violated:**

- the ethical and moral obligations set forth in Scripture;
- the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Constitution; and,
- the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), Section I, Statement 2; and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), and Section I, Statement 1.

**C. CHARGES RELATED TO FAILURE TO COMPLETE A COMMITMENT:**

8. From October 6, 2021, through the end of your employment with Presbytery of New Covenant, you falsely represented that you would complete Boundary training then failed to complete same. You stated in your October 6, 2021, letter to Northwoods Presbyterian Church that you would undergo the training. Instead, you viewed only a portion of a Boundaries video in 2022, but never complete the training. There is a witness regarding this event.

This misconduct is a violation of:

- the ethical and moral obligations set forth in the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Constitution and Scripture; and,
- the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees and Volunteers the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), Section II, Statement 12.

There is a witness and documentation regarding this offense.

**Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-02 PC(USA) Presbytery of New Covenant**

**vs.  
Aaron Seay**

**\*DISPOSITION/STATUS OF THE CASE**

On September 14, 2023, the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Sugar Land requested a Book of Order D-7.0401(a) Reference of the disciplinary case of their accused member, Deacon Aaron Seay, to the Presbytery of New Covenant. The Permanent Judicial Commission of the presbytery met on September 22, 2023, deliberated on the request of the church and accepted the Reference. The Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-02 Investigating Committee was established, trained and conducted its investigation.

On October 15, 2024, these charges were signed by the Investigating Committee, filed with the Stated Clerk for Judicial Process, and presented to the Presbytery of New Covenant Permanent Judicial Commission.

On November 4, 2024, Aaron Seay renounced the jurisdiction of the PC(USA). He is no longer a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Due to these circumstances, this summary report to presbytery has not included the names of witnesses nor the full details of the charges. The full set of charges will be sealed for future use in the event the accused chooses to return to the PC(USA), at which time this disciplinary case would resume in the Presbytery of New Covenant by moving forward with preparations for trial.

Members of the Disciplinary Case PNC 2023-02 Investigating Committee include: Rev. Mark Downs, Rev. Cheryl Gans, RE Shelley Hernandez, Rev. Stephen Oglesbee, and RE Karen Spivey.

John A. Lemen  
Stated Clerk for Judicial Process  
Presbytery of New Covenant