

**Presbytery Assembly – October 24, 2023**  
**Hybrid at Columbine United Church Littleton CO**  
**Theme “To Infinity and Beyond” and the Assembly was invited to dress up in the spirit of the theme.**

**Call to Order and Establishment of a Quorum:** The meeting came to order at 6:00 p.m. by Moderator John Yu. A quorum was established by Dee Cooper. John shared that the Assembly would be using a timed docket, and that Candice Sweet, The Stated Clerk for Synod of the Rocky Mountains, was seated as Stated Clerk for this meeting. John began the meeting with a Call to Worship and Prayer and explained the theme “To Infinity and Beyond”.

**Land Acknowledgement and Prayer:**

Rev. Stephen Poos-Bensen, Pastors of Columbine United Church, opened the Assembly with a Land Acknowledgement.

**Welcome and Introduction of Corresponding and new Ruling Elders**

John welcomed corresponding members Rev. Gwynneth Livesay from Mission Presbytery and Elder Candice Sweet from Utah Presbytery, Rev. Shavon Starling-Lewis the Co-Moderator of The General Assembly of the PC(USA), and Rev. Emily Odom from the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery.

John reminded the Assembly who is eligible to vote and that New Worshiping Community representatives would have the opportunity to advise the Assembly, by casting an Advisory Recommendation before the Assembly members voted on each motion. Voting at this assembly would be using AHA Slides.

**Preliminary Business (Omnibus Motion)**

The Assembly **approved** the following:

1. **Approve the Docket** as distributed, with such changes as may be announced at the start of the assembly.
2. **Enroll the Corresponding Members** that are introduced, and grant to them permission of the floor. The names and presbytery of membership of such persons must be written on the attendance roster or given to the Stated Clerk.
3. **Receive the reports contained in the Assembly packet.**
4. **Postpone the receipt and approve the Minutes of the Stated Assembly August 19, 2023, Annual Report of the Stated Clerk 2022, and additional outstanding reports at the Stated Assembly on January 23, 2024.**
5. **Receive the Stated Clerk’s Report:** Attended the Orientation for Mid-Council Leaders September 18-21, 2023 in Louisville, KY and returned home with a debilitating case of Covid-19. A Presbytery records review is underway to update all the files for congregations, communities, and pastors in order to be in compliance with the new Book of Order policies. The new Church Leadership Connection (The PC(USA) call system) is fully operational and a presbytery

training date for the new system is in the works. A gathering for Session Clerks will be organized this fall, details coming.

**6. Approve the Dates of the 2024 Stated Assembly Meetings:**

Tuesday, January 23, 2024 - Hybrid, Green Mountain Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, April 23, 2024 - In-Person, Location TBD

Tuesday, June 11, 2024 - Zoom

Saturday, August 17, 2024 - In-Person, Location TBD

Tuesday, October 22, 2024 - Zoom

**Lead Presbyter Report | Dee Cooper**

Our Star Fleet Captain, Dee Cooper, gave a Captain's Log report based on a Star Trek format. Our Star Fleet Captain shared that we were bringing the faithful vessel Denprez into the mothership with thanksgiving and appreciation for she had served us, protected us, supported us in our old explorations and that she was stretched beyond her capacity to fulfill the next mission we were being called upon to embark.

We needed time and imagination to continue crafting and creating our new generative exploratory starship. We spent the needed time developing the new system with innovation, creativity, and love for our next adventure by giving thanks to our pioneers who journeyed before us, replenishing our crews in the spirit of collaboration and innovation, and exploring the depth of God's love.

We have welcomed the support of others, and celebrated the new ways we are co-creating and truth-telling with each other.

"To live long and prosper" involves creating systems where all prosper by reaching out in love and building connection, in order to boldly learn and reflect the love of our Creator God. There is utmost urgency to continue our journey with each other toward the vastness of God's vision for our communities.

**Agency Review Task Force (ARTF)/Visionary Leadership Commission: Rob Habiger**

Rob Habiger, or Robbie One Kanobi as he was at Assembly, gave a brief report from his time as Visionary Leadership Commission Moderator. He summarized the work of the last year and also the work still before the Assembly as the new structure continues to take shape and be implemented. He spoke to the committees still to be populated and the opportunities to serve.

**Sermon and Greetings | The Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis, Co-Moderator of the General Assembly of PCUSA**

It was a special joy to welcome Shavon Starling-Louis to the Presbytery and the pulpit. She even came in a costume that referenced her sermon. She led us in a Prayer for Illumination, Scripture lessons Psalm 136:1-9 and Matthew 2:1-11, and preached an interactive sermon entitled *Among The Stars*, which included references to the Wise Ones who followed the star after Jesus birth, Star Wars, Star Trek, Toy Story, and the possibilities for the church in this time.

### **Ministry Relations Committee | Sheri Fry and Sandy Safford**

The Ministry Relations Committee (MRC), presented a report about the Denver Presbytery's minimum effective salary increase. The Ministry Relations Committee recommended that the minimum effective salary for 2024 be increased to \$60,000. approximately 5.7% from the 2023 minimum. (Effective salary moves from \$56,770 to \$60,000. An increase of approximately \$3200.)

A video explaining the rationale for this year's minimum effective salary is linked [here](#), and the full Minimum Effective Salary page for 2024 from the Presbytery website, click [here](#).

**Motion:** *The Ministry Relations Committee recommends to Presbytery that the minimum effective salary for Denver Presbytery in 2024 be increased to \$60,000. approximately 5.7% from the 2023 minimum. (Effective salary moves from \$56,770. to \$60,000. An increase of approximately \$3230. **Approved.***

### **Servant Leadership Development Committee (Committee on Representation): Nancy Dixon**

Nancy spoke of the continued work of the SLDC as the new agencies continue to launch and reminded folx that all names brought forth have agreed to their role and commitment.

**Motion:** *The Servant Leadership Development Committee (SLDC) recommends to the Presbytery the election of Katie Robb Davis (class of 2025) to the Ministry Preparation Committee as Moderator. **Approved***

**Motion:** *The Servant Leadership Development Committee (SLDC) recommends to the Presbytery the following names for election to the Ministry Relations Core Team: Sheri Fry (Class of 2025) as Moderator, and Don Shrumm (Class of 2026) as leader for the Transitions Team. **Approved***

**Motion:** *The Servant Leadership Development Committee (SLDC) recommends to the Presbytery the following names for election to the Visionary Leadership*

*Commission: Stephen Scott (Class of 2026) and Russ Kane (Class of 2026) as Moderator. **Approved***

### **Zimbabwe Delegation Report/ Zimbabwe Delegation 2023**

Rob Habiger, Dee Cooper, Celeste Habiger, Kim Graber, and Josphat Ombacho were present at the Assembly Meeting to share about the June 2024 Zimbabwe Partnership Delegation trip. Rob gave a brief summary of the trip, and Dee presented the glass teardrop from the Presbytery of Zimbabwe to the Presbytery of Denver. One of the highlights for the delegation was to be in attendance at the installation of Rev. Lydia Neshangwe as the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. A video montage of the delegation's trip was presented and can be viewed [here](#).

### **Time of Engagement | John Yu**

Moderator John Yu invited the Assembly to ponder the infinite, boundless, and eternal presence and possibility of God. The Assembly was invited to gather in groups in person and in break out rooms online to explore the following questions. 1. What new thing(s) have you learned about infinite and eternal God, God's Kingdom, and us in relation to our God? 2. How can we help one another go "beyond" in our relationship with God?

### **Presentation of 2024 Budget | Chuck Sparks, Sue Pilcher, Karen Yarberry**

Accountant Chuck Sparks and Treasurer Sue Pilcher presented the budget as Chewbacca and Princess Leia from Star Wars. Personnel Moderator Karen Yarberry presented the Presbytery staffing recommendations for 2024 which included a 4% COLA increase. There was no objection from the Assembly to include the Terms of Call for Dee Cooper, Fernando Rodríguez, and gretchen Sausville which were included in the budget proposal.

**Motion:** *The Visionary Leadership Commission recommends to the Presbytery the approval of the proposed 2024 Denver Presbytery Budget. **Approved***

### **Locally Situated Action Team (LSAT) from the Presbyterian Mission Agency| DeEtte Decker, Melody Smith and Emily Odom**

John Yu and Beth Carlisle introduced the Locally Situated Action Team (LSAT) which graced us with their presence from the "Mother Ship" in Louisville. DeEtte Decker is the Director of Communications for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Melody Smith is the Associate Director for Digital and Marketing Communications and Emily Odom is the Associate Director for Mission Communications. The LSAT team celebrated the work of Denver Presbytery over the last 6 months.

*Background: Last winter, the Presbyterian Mission Agency reached out to our Visionary Leadership Commission and invited Denver Presbytery to be part of a pilot program called the Locally Situated Action Team. They wanted to explore extending their ministry to local presbyteries, offering focused, specialized support for specific areas. Denver Presbytery leadership and the Presbyterian Mission Agency leadership landed with three distinct areas which we have agreed to partner in. 1) Personnel development, 2) Equipping support for our new structures, 3) Communications.*

**Adjournment, Communion, and Benediction**

The Assembly Meeting was adjourned with the Sacrament of Communion at 8:26 PM. Stephen Poos-Bensen and Jill VanderWal, the pastors of Columbine United Church, led the assembly in an open and inclusive liturgy. Shavon Starling-Louis gave the benediction.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. gretchen N. Sausville, Stated Clerk