

# Stated Meeting of the Synod Assembly

## October 2, 2021

*Approved per Standing Rules, October 7, 2021.*

### Call to Order & Opening Prayer

The Synod of Mid-America held a stated assembly meeting on Saturday, October 2, 2021, by Zoom video conference. Moderator the Rev. Rachel Dannar called the stated meeting of the Synod Assembly to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened with prayer.

Stated Clerk the Rev. Brian Ellison offered a brief orientation on how the video conferencing technology would be used for the meeting.

### Attendance / Opening Matters

The Stated Clerk virtually called the roll. The final attendance of the meeting was as follows (P=Present, E=Excused):

Present?	Commissioner		Presbytery	
P	Rob	Cardwell	Giddings-Lovejoy	RE
P	Cheryl	Rainey	Giddings-Lovejoy	RE
P	Cecil	Wood	Giddings-Lovejoy	RE
P	Julie	Berger	Giddings-Lovejoy	MWS
P	Vicky	Michaels	Giddings-Lovejoy	MWS
E	Bill	Smutz	Giddings-Lovejoy	MWS
P	Harold	Frye	Heartland	RE
P	Josephine	Njoroge	Heartland	RE
E	Kyle	Palmer	Heartland	RE
P	Rachel	Dannar	Heartland	MWS
	Andrew	Florio	Heartland	MWS
	VACANT		Heartland	MWS
P	Reina	Daleske	John Calvin	RE

P	Robert (Bob)	Wilson	John Calvin	RE
P	Jennifer	Dawson	John Calvin	MWS
	John	Nipper	John Calvin	MWS
P	J.R.	Greer	Missouri Union	RE
E	Ramona	Dobson	Missouri Union	RE
	Rob	Hughes	Missouri Union	MWS
P	Bertie	Rose	Missouri Union	MWS
P	Lois	Schrock	Northern Kansas	RE
P	Patrick	Yancey	Northern Kansas	RE
E	Chris	Davis	Northern Kansas	MWS
P	Phyllis	Stutzman	Northern Kansas	MWS
P	Jennifer	Keim	Southern Kansas	RE
P	Debbie	Farrell	Southern Kansas	RE
P	Deb	Schmidt	Southern Kansas	MWS
P	Stan	Martin	Southern Kansas	MWS

Article VI.3 of the Synod ByLaws states, “The quorum for stated and special meetings shall be six Ruling Elders and six Teaching Elders, representing at least three of the member presbyteries.” The moderator declared that a quorum was present.

The Stated Clerk introduced corresponding and ex-officio members, stated clerks and other staff of the presbyteries, and other guests and observers. Ruling Elder Lois Schrock moved **that the following corresponding and ex-officio members be seated**, with voice but without vote:

P	Liz	Kanerva	Giddings-Lovejoy (Acting Head of Staff)
	Dale	Jackson	Heartland
P	Malinda	Spencer	John Calvin
P	Deborah	Boucher-Payne	Missouri Union
P	Melanie	Hancock	Northern Kansas
	Gail	Doering	Southern Kansas
P	Tony	De La Rosa	Transitional Synod Exec.
P	Brian	Ellison	Synod Stated Clerk
*	Patrick	Yancey	Synod Treasurer

\* It was noted that the Synod Treasurer, Ruling Elder Patrick Yancey, was already seated as a commissioner. The motion was approved by common consent. The following presbytery stated clerks and other staff were also present as observers:

Robert Frasier (Stated Clerk, Northern Kansas) and Joy Myers (Stated Clerk, Giddings-Lovejoy),

The proposed docket was presented. The Rev. Deb Schmidt moved **that the docket be adopted**. The motion received a second and was approved by common consent.

### **Service of Worship**

The Synod Assembly proceeded to a time of worship, including a sermon by Moderator Danner on Romans 12:1-11 and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

### **Report of the Stated Clerk**

Stated Clerk the Rev. Brian Ellison presented his report. His written report included the following items for information:

- a. The Minutes of the April 15, 2021, synod assembly were approved by the members of the Governance Committee in accordance with the Standing Rules on April 26, 2021.
- b. Action taken by the Synod Assembly through Electronic Vote 2021-3, a motion from the Committee on Representation, which the Stated Clerk put before commissioners for an email vote on July 8, 2021: **That the Synod Assembly elect Ruling Elder Harold Frye as moderator of the Committee on Finance to fill an unexpired term for the duration of 2021.**

On July 17, 2021, the Stated Clerk reported that 21 (of 26 currently enrolled) Commissioners (12 Ruling Elders and 9 Ministers) representing all six presbyteries, participated in the vote, exceeding the number required for a quorum. The vote on the motion was 21-0, and was considered to be approved.

- c. Action taken by the Synod Assembly through Electronic Vote 2021-4, a motion from the Committee on Mission and Ministry Support, which the Stated Clerk put before commissioners for an email vote on August 19, 2021: **That the Synod Assembly allow the funds designated for Missouri and Illinois Higher Education Grants, in 2021 only, to be used for five \$500 grants, totaling \$2,500, for applicants from congregations in Kansas and Missouri other than the smallest 100 congregations in each state.**

On August 29, 2021, the Stated Clerk reported that 22 (of 26 currently enrolled) Commissioners (11 Ruling Elders and 11 Ministers) representing all six presbyteries, participated in the vote, exceeding the number required for a quorum. The vote on the motion was 19-3, and was considered to be approved.

- d. Ruling Elder Cheryl Rainey was elected as commissioner from Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery, effective August 26, 2021, to a term expiring December 31, 2022.

(The position was previously vacant.) Elder Rainey's position had previously been elected to the Committee on Mission and Ministry Support.

- e. Minister Commissioner Paul Rock resigned as a commissioner from Heartland Presbytery and as chair of the Synod Finance Committee, effective July 1, 2021.
- f. The Rev. Pam Prouty, stated clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, concluded her service (as stated clerk pro tem) for a remedial case from which the stated clerk of the Synod of Mid-America was recused. At the request of the parties, the remedial case was dismissed on May 21, 2021, and the matter was concluded. The stated clerk expressed deep gratitude to Rev. Prouty for her service in this capacity.

On recommendation of the Stated Clerk, Vicky Michaels moved **that the synod approve the presbytery minutes for 2020 as follows:**

- a. Giddings-Lovejoy: Approve with the following exceptions:
  - No report of an annual financial review
  - Reports of Administrative Commissions are not included
  - No report of implementation of the presbytery's commitment to inclusiveness and representation.And with the following comments:
  - Attestation is not on the title page or bound in the minutes.
  - AA/EEO policy statement should be included in the minutes.
- b. Heartland: Approve without exception and with the following comment:
  - The Committee on Representation report references a spreadsheet of representation data that is not included in the minutes.
- c. John Calvin: Approve without exception
- d. Missouri Union: Approve without exception
- e. Northern Kansas: Approve without exception
- f. Southern Kansas: Approve with the following exceptions:
  - No report of implementation of the presbytery's commitment to inclusiveness and representation (e.g., indicating racial/ethnic identity of those elected to presbytery entities)
  - No annual report of the clerk on the equalization of minister/ruling elder commissioners.
  - There does not appear to be a Committee on Representation.And with the following comments:
  - An index or table of contents with page numbers should be included.
  - Consider printing on both sides of the page.

The motion received a second. Ruling Elder Cecil Wood noted that Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery has been undertaking intentional work with regard to both its financial review and the implementation of the presbytery's commitment to inclusiveness and representation and asked to have his comment noted in the minutes. The main motion was approved by common consent.

On recommendation of the Stated Clerk, J.R. Greer moved **that the following stated meeting dates for the synod assembly be set for 2022:**

**g. Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m., tentatively in person in the Kansas City area**

**h. Thursday, October 6, 9 a.m., video conference**

The motion received a second and was approved by common consent.

## **Report of the Committee on Finance, Part 1**

The Committee on Finance report was presented by its moderator, Ruling Elder Harold Frye. On behalf of the committee, he moved **that the Synod Assembly approve the following “Investment Policy and Objectives for Invested Funds,” including Exhibits A through E:**

### **SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA INVESTMENT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES FOR INVESTED FUNDS**

Approved by the Finance Committee, August 24, 2021

To be adopted by Synod Assembly, October 2, 2021

#### **SECTION I. INTRODUCTION**

This Investment Policy governs the investment management of the Synod of Mid-America (SoMA) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is intended to be consistent with the policies of the Investment Advisor, which is the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation and its constituent corporations (collectively referred to as “The Foundation”). The purpose of this policy is to direct and coordinate the actions of the SoMA Finance Committee, the SoMA staff, and its Investment Advisor -- currently The Foundation -- so that the investment objectives may be achieved for the invested funds (“Funds”) of SoMA.

This policy is intended to be flexible and may be amended to reflect material changes in either the financial condition of its Funds, the financial condition of SoMA, the economic environment or the opportunities available in the capital markets, keeping in mind the twin goals of:

- 1) providing a stream of income for SoMA, its operations, and programs, and
- 2) preserving the real purchasing power of the Funds.

#### **SECTION II. GUIDELINES**

- A. *Tax Exemption* – The Funds are tax-exempt assets of SoMA, which is qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the “Code”). As such, those responsible for the Funds are required to adhere to the requirements of the Code, as amended from time to time to maintain such qualification.
- B. *Responsible Investing* - The Funds are to be invested in accordance with the social witness principles of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The most recent iteration of social witness principles is outlined in Exhibit A.

- C. *Distribution and Spending Formula* – The Distribution and Spending Formula encompasses withdrawals from funds and the spending policy associated with same. The budget for each fiscal year will be determined by SoMA; and may include various sources of income, including withdrawal from Funds the dividends, interest, and capital gains subject to an annual resolution approved by the Finance Committee and adopted by the Synod Assembly based on the market value of the Funds. The “market value” shall be calculated using a five year (or 20 calendar quarter) rolling average of calendar quarter-end balances of the Funds.
- D. *Prudent Management* –SoMA shall select professional investment advisors, such as The Foundation, who comply with Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (“UPMIFA”) standards. Selected investment advisors shall offer their expertise, guidance and assistance needed for SoMA to be a faithful steward of the Funds and shall provide regular reports on liquidity assessment, rate of return, portfolio risk, asset allocation and overall performance.

### **SECTION III. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES**

The primary financial objectives of the Funds are to:

- 1) support a stream of regular distributions in support of annual budgetary needs; and
- 2) preserve the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the Funds net of regular distributions.

In order to achieve the financial objectives, the Funds will initially target a total annualized return of at least 7.34% net of investment expenses, on average over a five-year period, consistent with similar goals of The Foundation and subject to adjustment by SoMA on the basis of economic conditions.

### **SECTION IV. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Synod Assembly**

- A. Approve the SoMA Investment Policy and Objectives for Invested Funds.
- B. Delegate to the Finance Committee certain responsibilities for the management of the Funds and investment programs as specified below.
- C. Approve the selection of the Investment Advisor (currently The Foundation).
- D. Periodically review results of the investment programs.

#### **Finance Committee**

- A. Develop portfolio objectives and monitor the achievement of these objectives.
- B. Review the policy portfolio of the Investment Advisor as outlined in Exhibit B.
- C. Review the benchmarks for asset/strategy composite and total portfolio performance as outlined in Exhibit C.

- D. Monitor the effects of the Distribution/Spending policy on the Funds and recommend modifications, as necessary.
- E. The Finance Committee members shall review the portfolio risk of the Funds as measured by asset allocation (equity versus fixed investment percentage in the portfolio) at least annually. In conducting its review, the Committee may utilize the standards outlined in Exhibit D (“Asset Allocation Standards vs. Investment Objectives”).
- F. Evaluate the services of the Investment Advisor, The Foundation, and make any recommendations for managing the Funds to the Synod Assembly regarding the same, on a periodic basis.
- G. The Finance Committee shall regularly review the Investment Policy and Objectives for Invested Funds and report any findings as appropriate to the Synod Assembly for its consideration.
- H. The Finance Committee shall seek Synod Assembly approval of any recommended material changes to the Investment Policy and Objectives for Invested Funds.

### **Staff**

- A. Manage SoMA’s relationship with the external service providers including but not limited to The Foundation, financial institutions, accounting professionals, and outside auditing firms.
- B. Work with The Foundation and the Finance Committee as needed for management of the Funds.
- C. Authorize and execute money transfers that involve the Funds as appropriate in conjunction with the SoMA Treasurer.

### **Investment Advisor**

- A. Annually review this policy statement to ensure its appropriateness. Inform the Finance Committee of any findings and recommend changes, including changes to asset allocation policy and benchmarks.
- B. Monitor and inform the Finance Committee periodically of the prevailing capital market environment and circumstances which may impact the performance of the Funds.
- C. Prepare a quarterly report and communicate to Staff and the Finance Committee any significant portfolio issues that might arise regarding the Funds.

## **SECTION V. PORTFOLIO ASSET ALLOCATION AND RISK**

### **A. Asset Structure**

The Funds shall be diversified by asset class and investment strategy. The purpose of diversification is to provide reasonable assurance that no class of securities or individual holding will have a disproportionate impact on the Funds’ aggregate results.

The asset allocation of the Funds should reflect the proper balance of the Funds needed for liquidity, preservation of purchasing power net of distributions, and risk tolerance. The two broad categories of investments held will include - 1) *Safety assets* intended to help manage portfolio risks including drawdown and volatility. 2) *Growth assets* to drive

protection of purchasing power net of distributions over time. The target asset mix is noted in Exhibit B.

## **B. Rebalancing**

Rebalancing the actual allocation of the Funds shall seek to maintain the risk profile adopted by the Finance Committee. The Investment Advisor will review rebalancing periodically and discuss its process for rebalancing with Finance Committee on an annual basis.

## **SECTION VI. DISBURSEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

Annually, the Investment Advisor will make known to the SoMA Staff the market value of the Funds and the amounts, if any, available for withdrawal from interest, dividends and capital gains and the calculated amount available for distribution, subject to Section II of this Policy and the SoMA annual Distribution and Spending Formula resolution.

Annually, the Finance Committee may briefly review the source, purpose, performance and anticipated future use of the individual invested funds of SoMA and document same in their minutes. (See Exhibit E for the current list of SoMA invested funds.)

## **SECTION VII. REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Finance Committee will review this Policy and its exhibits periodically and recommend to the Synod Assembly amendments to reflect any needed updates or revisions.

### **EXHIBIT A**

#### **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL WITNESS PRINCIPLES OF THE SYNOD OF MID AMERICA, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) June 2021**

The Synod of Mid America seeks to invest assets and those for which it serves as fiduciary in accordance with the Social Witness Principles of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Wherever possible, investments will be sought in socially responsible mutual funds and ETFs. This includes prohibited securities of the General Assembly in alcohol, tobacco, gambling, weapons, for profit prisons and human rights offenders.



A Socially Responsible Core of Equity and Fixed Income may be diversified with Non SRI (Socially Responsible Investments) to achieve efficient diversification to enhance returns to support mission and ministry.

**EXHIBIT B**

**SYNOD OF MID AMERICA  
POLICY PORTFOLIO ASSET ALLOCATION**

**6/30/21**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Range</u>
<b>A. Cash</b>	7%	1 - 10%
<b>B. Fixed Income</b>	27%	20 - 40%
<b>C. Safety = A + B</b>	34%	22 - 50%
<b>D. US Equity</b>	61%	55 - 70%
<b>E. Intl Equity</b>	5%	5 - 15%
<b>F. Growth = D + E</b>	66%	60 - 85%
<b>Total = C + F</b>	100	

**EXHIBIT C**

**SYNOD OF MID AMERICA  
BENCHMARKING**

**Total Portfolio Benchmarking:**

**Blended Benchmark:** The primary portfolio level blended benchmark is aligned with the Policy Portfolio Allocation as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Index</u>
Cash	7%	BofA Merrill Lynch US 3 Month T Bill Index
Fixed Income	27%	Barclay's US Intermediate Aggregate
US Equity	61%	S&P 500
Intl Equity	5%	MSCI EAFE

**Asset Class Benchmarking:**

Individual asset class performance shall be measured against broad asset class benchmarks.

**EXHIBIT D**

**ASSET ALLOCATION GUIDELINES VS. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES**

**Growth:** These accounts tend to be represented by a high percentage of equities ( $\geq 80\%$ ), with a nominal cash position for float purposes. Default target allocations are as follows:

Capital Appreciation, Aggressive: 98% equities, 0% fixed income, 2% cash  
Growth, Aggressive: 90% equities, 8% fixed income, 2% cash  
Growth, Moderate: 80% equities, 18% fixed income, 2% cash

**Balanced Growth:** These accounts tend to have the majority ( $\geq 50\%$ ) of their assets represented by equities for funding with a longer-term time horizon. Default target allocations are as follows:

Balanced Growth, Aggressive: 70% equities, 28% fixed income, 2% cash.  
Balanced Growth, Moderate: 60% equities, 38% fixed income, 2% cash.  
Balanced Growth, Conservative: 50% equities, 48% fixed income, 2% cash.

**Balanced Income:** These accounts tend to have the majority ( $\geq 50\%$ ) of their assets represented by fixed income securities for funding on a medium-term time horizon and/or uncertain cash needs, though a longer-term time horizon and higher income needs are possible. Default target allocations are as follows:

Balanced Income, Aggressive: 40% equities, 58% fixed income, 2% cash.  
Balanced Income, Moderate: 30% equities, 68% fixed income, 2% cash.  
Balanced Income, Conservative: 20% equities, 78% fixed income, 2% cash.

**Income:** These accounts tend to be represented by fixed income and cash only. The Synod's time horizon, and/or uncertainty of cash flows shall inform what duration would best serve the Synod and its income needs.

**Stable Value:** These accounts are represented by fixed income securities that have a higher certainty of principal protection (e.g., FDIC CDs, Treasury bonds, money market instruments). However, there is no guarantee that market events would not impact these securities. The Synod's time horizon and/or uncertainty of cash flows will inform as to what duration would best serve the Synod and its income needs.

**Socially Conscious Investing:** Any of the above investment objectives shall be managed in a fashion that bears witness to Presbyterian values.

## **EXHIBIT E**

### **SYNOD OF MID AMERICA INVESTED FUNDS**

#### **A. Kansas Steele – Restricted/Donor Designated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$1,073,818

Source: Will of Robert H Steele 7/61

Purpose: For benefit of 100 smallest churches in KS  
1982 resolution by Synod to spend only interest accrued yearly for  
Emergency & Scholarship Grants, Service & Leadership Development, or  
Staff Support Grants

History: Used to provide for Higher Education Scholarships for members of  
eligible Kansas congregations. Awards of \$500-\$1000 per applicant;  
renewable w/ application annually.

Current congregational membership cap qualified to apply/receive Higher Education  
Grants in Kansas is 90. As membership changes each year, the list of eligible  
churches for qualified applicants is updated.

#### **B. MO/IL Endowment - Restricted/Assembly Designated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$582,944

Source: From Bicentennial Fund Gifts

Purpose: For benefit of 100 smallest churches in MO/IL  
1982 resolution by Synod to spend only interest accrued yearly for  
Emergency & Scholarship Grants, Service & Leadership Development, or  
Staff Support Grants.

History: Used to provide for students applying for Higher Education Scholarships  
for members of eligible Missouri and Illinois congregations. Awards of  
\$500-  
\$1000 per applicant; renewable w/application annually.

Current congregational membership cap qualified to apply/receive Higher Education Grants in Missouri and Illinois is 45. As membership changes each year, the list of eligible churches for qualified applicants is updated.

**C. New Church Development – Restricted/Assembly Designated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$178,628

Source: From Synod unrestricted funds and Bicentennial Fund Gifts

Purpose: Established in 1992 for new or transformed development of churches.  
Potential match requested from from General Assembly but not required.

History: Grant awarded in 2020: Heartland Presbytery (\$25,000)  
For Heartland New Worshipping Communities Commission

**D. Glenkirk Education – Restricted/Assembly Designated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$141,106

Source: Sale of Glenkirk property in Missouri in 1971

Purpose: Principal and income designated by Synod of Missouri for continuing education for ministers and laypersons.  
To assist presbyteries in developing new and or innovative continuing education programs rather than supporting regular or annual programs on a continued basis. Such regular or annual programs should be funded by presbyteries through their normal funding channels. Not every proposal need be funded for the full amount requested or for total available.

History: Used for coaching and other continuing education opportunities by any/all persons or programs that effect presbyteries equally.

Most recently, the Synod’s Jesse C. Swanigan Fellowship program has used Glenkirk Education funds to nurture and support women and men of color in order that they might obtain mid-council executive leadership education in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Funding has been expended in the following amounts:

2019: \$18,977

2020: \$8,388

**E. Innovation Fund – Restricted/Assembly Designated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$1,072,455

Source: From sale of Synod of Missouri office property and tract of land near Manhattan KS. (Name & use of funds changed in 2011 from “Building Fund.”)

Purpose: To further creative ministry within the region. Originally, to support SoMA member presbyteries in securing creative and thoughtful Elders to facilitate visions for new congregational ministry that the presbytery might not otherwise be able to pursue.

History: Previously there was an application available on the SoMA website. Requirements were quite rigorous and required Presbytery approval, recommendation, and support. In 2017, the former grant program was replaced with the Paragon Grant, a congregational/presbytery grant with

fewer restrictions. Presbytery support requested but is not required. Total Paragon grants were awarded as follows:  
2019: \$20,447  
2020: \$30,000

#### **F. Operations Fund – Unrestricted/Undesignated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$1,099,371 (minimum to be kept in fund - \$300,000)

Source: From decision of the Assembly in 2013 to redeem \$125,000 from a Church Development Corporation Stewardship account to supplement a conservative estimate of income to be received from Presbytery per capita & mission pledges.

In 2013 a new auditor discovered an additional resource available to SoMA and an additional \$800,000 was invested into the Operating Fund.

Purpose: The Executive shall use the SoMA Operating Fund as budgeted income to further the Mission of the SoMA.

History: In research conducted by the Staff in 1991, it was revealed that the establishment of the Operating Fund had no policy which dictated use of funds, and that it has been utilized in various ways over its previous 23 years. The current policy implemented in 2014 sought to correct the oversight. Since that time, the fund has been utilized to supplement/offset expense deficit of SoMA budget.

#### **G. Legacy Fund – Unrestricted/Undesignated**

Value as of 6/30/21: \$170,849

Source: Est. May 2015 from interest derived from all Investment accounts without “raiding” principal (i.e., ONLY amounts above principal amounts will be transferred to Legacy)

Purpose: To allow for more rapid growth of account with no restrictions or designation for use with full liquidity. Anticipated income to be approx. \$100,000 annually.

History: This account was originally established in 2015 to help “bridge the gap” between operational income and expenses. It was quickly recognized that this account, if left to mature, would provide for income needed to supplement long term, i.e., “legacy,” opportunities.

The motion was approved by common consent.

On behalf of the committee, Elder Frye moved **that the Synod Assembly adopt the following resolution regarding the distribution and spending formula: Based on market values calculated using a five-year rolling average of calendar quarter-end balances of invested funds ending June 30, 2021, the Synod of Mid America RESOLVES that the percentage distribution of investment fund market value available for spending shall not exceed 4.5% for the 2021 and 2022 fiscal years.**

Following discussion, the motion was approved by electronic vote, 19-0.

### **Report of the Committee on Mission and Ministry Support**

Ruling Elder Jennifer Keim, moderator of the Committee on Mission and Ministry Support, presented the committee's report. On behalf of the committee, Elder Keim moved **that the Synod Assembly approve that the missional priorities be listed as follows during 2022:**

- 1. That priority consideration be given to finding significant ways to dismantle structural racism and white privilege and to address their effect on the life of our presbyteries and their constituent membership, and that they be supported and collaborated with as they work to address these issues.**
- 2. That Ruling Elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament receive access to practical and theological continuing education at a cost comparable to other offerings.**
- 3. That women and men of color be extended opportunities to obtain executive leadership experience or education at no financial cost to them.**
- 4. That presbyteries and their elected leadership be resourced and directly supported through (but not limited to) advice, funding, training and equipping, consultation, mediation, process support, and leadership gatherings.**
- 5. That cross-presbytery initiatives be encouraged and supported financially, promotionally, and/or through participation in planning and implementation.**
- 6. That persons and groups identified as the intended beneficiaries of SoMA designated funds are afforded access to said funds according to a timely and clear process.**
- 7. That youth and young adults from within the Synod's bounds be provided with comprehensive church leadership training at no cost to them.**

The motion was approved, 17-0.

On behalf of the committee, Elder Keim moved **that the Synod Assembly concur with the following Overture from John Calvin Presbytery to the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022):**

#### **On Benefit Equity Among Mid Council Executive Staff**

**The Presbytery of John Calvin overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to instruct the Board of Pensions to allow Ruling Elders serving in Mid Council Executive Staff positions the option of enrolling in the Pastor's Participation Plan of the Board of Pensions.**

**DEFINITION OF MID COUNCIL EXECUTIVE STAFF:** For purposes of this overture, Mid Council Executive Staff is defined as any Ruling Elder employed by a Mid Council of the Presbyterian Church (USA) who, if ordained as a Teaching Elder /

Minister of the Word and Sacrament, would qualify for enrollment in the Pastor's Participation Plan of the Board of Pensions. Descriptive (not prescriptive) examples include: Executive, General, Pastoral, or Associate Presbyter; Stated Clerk; Director or Coordinator.

### **Rationale**

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has, both in polity and tradition, held parity between Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders / Ministers of the Word and Sacrament. As a denomination we have recognized that both Ruling and Teaching Elders bring unique gifts to the work of ministry at all levels of church leadership. In particular, Ruling Elders have a long history of serving the Mid Councils of our denomination as Executive Staff.

Until recently, Ruling Elders serving in Mid Council Executive Staff positions were eligible to participate in what is now termed the "Pastor's Participation Plan" of the Board of Pensions. However, with the introduction of the Menu Plan in 2017 this eligibility was ended and these individuals were shifted to the Menu Plan. While the Menu Plan offers the possibility of the same coverage as Pastor's Participation, in some cases the cost of this coverage is significantly higher. In the case of one executive staff person in John Calvin Presbytery the cost difference between the Menu Plan and Pastor's Participation was nearly \$20,000 per year for medical coverage alone.

In conversations between John Calvin Presbytery and the Board of Pensions, it was shared by the Board Representative that this experience is the minority experience and for many cases the Menu Plan is no more expensive than Pastor's Participation. John Calvin Presbytery is deeply thankful that this is a minority experience; however, in conversations with other Mid Council leaders, we understand that we are not alone in this experience. Our hope is by allowing the option (but not the requirement) for Ruling Elders in Mid Council Executive Staff positions to enroll in Pastor's Participation that we can minimize the financial impact of this minority situation.

In the latest edition of "Living by the Gospel," the Board of Pensions presents a Theology of Benefits on the first page, which states in part:

"The very character of God as revealed in the Scriptures compels those who worship and serve God to "maintain justice, and do what is right." Hence, from its inception the Church has affirmed just compensation for its servants. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has repeatedly confirmed this commitment to support its servants with compensation that includes salary, benefits, vacation, and opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal. ... We call people to varied forms of service and covenant to support them so they may devote their best gifts and energies to the work of God's kingdom."

By opening the option to enroll in Pastor's Participation to those Ruling Elders in Mid Council Executive Staff positions, we are making it possible for all Mid Councils to live up to the calling presented by the Board of Pensions in their Theology of Benefits, supporting all those who are called to "varied forms of service" as we "support them so they may devote their best gifts and energies to the work of God's kingdom." The current situation leaves some Mid Councils in the challenging position of having to choose between meeting budgetary obligations or providing benefits to Ruling Elders, or even worse, having to decide between the ideal

individual for an Executive Staff position who happens to be a Ruling Elder or someone who might be a less-ideal fit, but who is cheaper to provide benefits for as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament.

Among ministers there is “call neutrality” when it comes to the provision of benefits to make it easier for a smaller congregation to call a qualified individual. It is the hope of John Calvin Presbytery that we could return to the pre-2017 pattern of a similar “neutrality” for Mid Council Executive Staff to empower our smaller Mid Councils to call the best person for the work of ministry in their context.

Following discussion, the motion was approved by common consent.

Elder Keim reported for information that twelve higher education grants have been awarded of \$500 each through the synod’s program. The committee committed to providing greater clarity in future years about who is eligible to receive the grants.

Elder Keim also reported for information about plans underway for 2022 to involve the synod in the work of medical debt relief.

### **Report of the Transitional Synod Executive**

Transitional Synod Executive Ruling Elder Tony De La Rosa presented his report. He recognized leaders and staff of the synod for their work during the early days of his tenure and commended the synod for its mission. leading the synod assembly in a values discernment exercise.

The assembly took a brief recess at 10:17 a.m., reconvening at 10:22.

### **Report of the Committee on Representation**

The report of the Committee on Representation was presented by its moderator, Ruling Elder Patrick Yancey.

The assembly proceeded to the election of the Moderator of the Synod of Mid-America for 2022. On behalf of the committee, Elder Yancey placed in nomination **the Rev. Jennifer Dawson** (WF), John Calvin Presbytery. There were no nominations from the floor. The Assembly voted to elect Rev. Dawson, 17-0, and the Moderator declared Rev. Dawson duly elected to the office of Moderator.

The assembly proceeded to the election of the Vice Moderator of the Synod of Mid-America for 2022. On behalf of the committee, Elder Yancey placed in nomination **Ruling Elder Debbie Farrell** (WF), Presbytery of Southern Kansas. There were no nominations from the floor. The Assembly voted to elect Elder Farrell, 19-0, and the Moderator declared Elder Farrell duly elected to the office of Vice Moderator.

On behalf of the committee, Elder Yancey **nominated the following slate, as requested by the Committee on Governance, to serve as a six-person work group for the purpose of working with the transitional synod executive to lead a process of**



**visioning and discernment for the synod, representing all six presbyteries, with flexibility as to the specific membership and attention to representation concerns:**

<b>Julie Berger (GL)</b>	<b>WFC</b>
<b>Jennifer Dawson (JC)</b>	<b>WFC</b>
<b>Salvador Gavaldá (HL)</b>	<b>HME</b>
<b>Craig Howard (MU)</b>	<b>BMC</b>
<b>Jennifer Keim (SK)</b>	<b>WFE</b>
<b>Patrick Yancey (NK)</b>	<b>WME</b>

The motion was approved by common consent.

Elder Yancey reported for information on the committee's activity to promote representation, offering appreciation to the presbyteries and their staff with whom the committee has been in communication to seek diversity among commissioners.

### **Report of the Committee on Governance**

The report of the Committee on Governance was presented by its moderator, the Rev. Jennifer Dawson. On behalf of the committee, Rev. Dawson moved **that the Synod approve the following terms of compensation for Transitional Synod Executive Tony De La Rosa, effective January 1, 2022:**

**Salary \$101,474**  
**Benefits to be calculated at BOP rates**  
**Travel and other expenses, as budgeted**  
**Vacation 4 weeks / Study leave 2 weeks**

Rev. Dawson noted that the committee would conduct a full review of the Transitional Synod Executive in the spring. The motion was approved, 18-0

On behalf of the committee, Rev. Dawson moved **that the Synod approve the following terms of compensation for Stated Clerk Brian Ellison, effective January 1, 2022:**

**Salary \$19,565**  
**Benefits (Pension/Death-Disability package - 10%)**  
**Travel and other expenses, as budgeted**  
**Vacation 4 weeks / Study leave 2 weeks**

Rev. Dawson noted that the committee concluded its annual evaluation of the work of the Stated Clerk. The motion was approved, 20-0.

Rev. Dawson and Elder De La Rosa reported for information that the committee has worked closely with the transitional synod executive following the resignation of Danelle O'Connell as synod administrative assistant. A new half-time position description for administrative assistant was developed and the hiring process is currently underway.

The committee's written report also included information that it had approved the following changes to the Personnel Manual of the Synod of Mid-America:

- Clarified the list of paid holidays for synod staff as follow:
  - New Year's Day
  - Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

- Presidents' Day
  - Memorial Day
  - Juneteenth Day
  - Independence Day
  - Labor Day
  - Indigenous Peoples' Day
  - Veterans Day
  - Thanksgiving Day
  - The Day After Thanksgiving Day
  - In addition, the Synod offices will be closed the last two full weeks of the calendar year, including Christmas Eve and Christmas, as a paid holiday period.
- Clarified the mileage reimbursement rates for staff and volunteers who use their personal cars for SoMA business as follows:
    - Synod Personnel (Executive, Stated Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and temporary staff) – IRS Employee Rate
    - Synod Officers (Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer) – IRS Volunteer Rate
    - Presbytery Executives, Stated Clerks, or other presbytery staff – Presbyteries encouraged to reimburse. If reimbursed by Synod, IRS Volunteer Rate
    - Commissioners attending Synod Assembly or committee meeting – IRS Volunteer Rate

## Report of the Committee on Finance, Part 2

Elder Frye presented Part 2 of the report of the Committee on Finance. He presented for information the fact that the Committee had received and reviewed the full financial review of the synod for 2020, and he presented that report to the assembly (*Appendix #1*). He also noted that the synod will conduct a full audit in 2022, as provided in the proposed budget.

Elder Frye also presented the year-to-date financial reports, through August 31, 2021, for the information of the assembly (*Appendix #2*).

On behalf of the committee, Elder Frye moved **that the synod assembly establish the 2022 per capita apportionment at \$2.90, unchanged from 2021**. The motion was approved by common consent.

On behalf of the committee, Elder Frye moved **that the synod assembly approve the budget for 2022 as follows:**

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2022</u>
<u>Shared Mission Income</u>	
Giddings-Lovejoy	\$ 29,000

Heartland	\$ 27,000
John Calvin	\$ 11,500
Missouri Union	\$ -
Northern Kansas	\$ 17,000
Southern Kansas	\$ 8,250
<b>Total Shared Mission Income</b>	<b>\$ 92,750</b>

Investment/Savings Income

Operations and Legacy Funds	\$ 42,611
Additional Unrestricted Funds Transfer	\$ 30,000
Glenkirk Fund	\$ 5,745
Innovation Fund	\$ 30,000
KS Steele Fund	\$ 3,000
MO-IL Endowment	\$ 3,000
New Church Development Fund	\$ 6,595
Theocademy Savings/MALT Account	\$ 15,000
<b>Total Investment/Savings Income</b>	<b>\$ 135,951</b>

Per Capita Income

\$2.90

Giddings-Lovejoy	\$ 31,781
Heartland	\$ 36,789
John Calvin	\$ 7,482
Missouri Union	\$ 13,047
Northern Kansas	\$ 14,410
Southern Kansas	\$ 11,916
<b>Total Per Capita Income*</b>	<b>\$ 115,426</b>

Program Income

Theocademy Sales	\$ 1,000
MALT Interim Training	\$ 15,000
<b>Total Program Income</b>	<b>\$ 16,000</b>

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$ 360,127**

**EXPENSES**

Missional Expenses

Swanigan Scholars (Glenkirk Fund)	\$ 8,000
Paragon Grant (Innovation Fund)	\$ 30,000
Higher Education Scholarships (KS Steele/MO-IL Endowment)	\$ 5,000
Gathering for Pastoral Sustenance	\$ 5,000
EP Forum/Presbytery Leader Formation	\$ 6,900

Stated Clerks Gathering/Minutes Reading	\$ -
New Church Development Support	\$ 8,000
Emerging Leaders Initiative/Triennium Support	\$ 10,000
Cross-presbytery Initiatives	\$ 7,000
Multi-Media Production (Theocademy Savings)	\$ 2,000
Midwest Calling	\$ -
MALT Expenses	15,000
<b>Total Missional Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 96,900</b>

Ecclesiastical Expenses

Synod Assembly and Committee Meetings	\$ 5,000
Stated Clerks Gathering/Minutes Reading	\$ 1,000
Total Meeting Expenses	\$ 6,000

Executive

Salary/Housing	\$ 101,474
Medical/Pension/Dental	\$ 28,000
Travel	\$ 25,000
Continuing Education	\$ 3,000
Professional Expenses	\$ 3,000
Total Executive	\$ 160,474

Administrative Assistant

Salary	\$ 20,400
Payroll Taxes	\$ -
Total Administrative Assistant	\$ 20,400

Stated Clerk

Salary	\$ 19,565
Medical/Pension	\$ 1,957
Expenses	\$ 3,000
Total Stated Clerk	\$ 24,522
<b>Total Ecclesiastical Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 211,396</b>

Operation/Administrative Expenses

Office Lease	\$ 6,000
Accounting & Payroll Services	\$ 6,000
Payroll Taxes	\$ 10,820
New Equipment	\$ 500
Supplies	\$ 1,500
Telephone/Internet	\$ 5,000

Postage	\$ 500
Audit/Review	\$ 13,000
Insurance	\$ 6,500
Bank Fees	\$ 250
Legal Fees	\$ 200
Subscriptions	\$ 1,500
<b>Total Operation/Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 51,770</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 360,127</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 360,066</b>

Following discussion, the motion was approved, 20-0.

### **Service of Installation**

In a brief service of worship, the Assembly installed the Rev. Jennifer Dawson as Moderator and Ruling Elder Debbie Farrell as Vice Moderator, effective January 1, 2022.

### **Closing Matters**

There being no further business, the assembly adjourned with prayer at 10:58 a.m.

Brian Ellison  
Stated Clerk