Monday, March 20, 2017
Meeting Participants arrive in Puerto Rico.

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
The meeting of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) was convened by Barbara Gaddis at 9:00 a.m. in the La Puntilla Room of the Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel in San Juan Puerto Rico.

**Roll Call**
The following persons present for all or part of the conference call were:

**COGA Members:**
- Gaddis, Barbara – COGA Moderator
- Kennedy, Wilson – COGA Vice Moderator
- Kathy Matsushima
- Carol McDonald
- Denise Anderson
- Stephanie Anthony
- Mark Boyd
- Margaret Elliott
- Lynn Hargrove
- Andy James
- Eliana Maxim
- Leon Lovell-Martin
- J. Herbert Nelson – Ex-Officio

**Excused:**
- Marcia Mount Shoop
- Alejandra Spir-Haddad
- Jan Edmiston
- Marsha Zell Anson

**OGA Staff:**
- Tom Hay
- Cora Brown
- Angela Stevens
- Kerry Rice
- Beth Hessel
- John Wood
- Jerry Van Marter
- Brunhilda Williams-Curington
Stephanie Anthony led the opening worship.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly reviewed the proposed meeting agenda, and –

**VOTED** to approve the proposed agenda, as presented.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly reviewed the minutes from the following meetings and conference calls:

- Meeting – February 2016
- Conference Call – May 2016
- Coordinating Committee Conference Call – June 2016
- Meeting – October 2016
- Coordinating Committee Conference – November 2016
- Coordinating Committee Conference – December 2016
- Coordinating Committee Conference – February 2017

Some typographical errors were noted and corrected.

A motion was heard and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly -

**VOTED** to approve the minutes of previous COGA meetings and conference calls, with corrections.

COGA moderator, Barbara Gaddis, presented an overview of her work since the COGA meeting in October 2016.

Barbara received a request for a COGA member to be on the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) Executive Director search committee. However, COGA declined the request due to the limited contribution the COGA member would be able to make to the search committee’s work.

Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo recently accepted a new call with Presbyterian Church (USA)’s Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries in Louisville, Kentucky. His transition to this role requires his resignation from COGA. COGA leadership will work with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) to locate a candidate to fill the vacancy.

Barbara asked for COGA members to provide recommendations for criteria to be used by the GANC in their search for a new COGA member:

- Legal expertise
- Racial ethnic – specifically black, Hispanic or Korean
- Possible experience in theological seminary
- West of the Rocky Mountains
Barbara will submit the criteria to the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) to begin a search to fill the vacancy on COGA.

Denise Anderson shared highlights of her work as Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) since we last met. She and Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston have received positive feedback on their One Church, One Book project with the church-wide requested reading of *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving. The Co-Moderators plan to add another book that would focus on poverty and its intersectionality with matters regarding race.

2017 is the 49th anniversary of the introduction of the Poor People’s Campaign, which is the initiative Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been working on at the time of his assassination. A grass-roots interfaith and ecumenical effort has begun to push reigniting a new Poor People’s Campaign in honor of its 50th anniversary. In June 2017, the Co-Moderators will go to Auburn Seminary to discern ways to talk create a project and curriculum in response to item 11-03 from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), which calls on the Church’s commitment to Matthew 25. With this in mind, the Co-Moderators are considering Liz Theoharis’ book, *Always With Us*, for the next One Church, One Book study. The book discusses what Jesus said about the poor.

The Co-Moderators have three more committee appointments to make, as referred by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). They will be meeting with Valerie Small to finalize these appointments. However, the applicant pool is slim, especially for those committees that must be comprised of people of color.

**General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**
Kathy Matsushima provided an overview of the recent meeting of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR). The meeting included group conversations about what God is calling them to do at this day and time; and a panel discussion on the current political climate and how it is dividing our country. The GACEIR also discussed the work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

**Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) Board**
Margaret Elliott has not yet attended a PHS Board meeting due to a scheduling conflict. She will attend the next meeting in early May 2017.

**PMA Audit Committee**
Stephanie Anthony reported that the PMA Audit Committee convened via conference call in November 2016. The committee is called to review the financial audit and general risk management of the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corp. It is the fiduciary arm of the church. The committee will meet again in April 2017.

**PMA Board**
Wilson Kennedy has not participated in recent conference calls with the PMA Board due to a coordination error that did not include him in the distribution listing for the calls. The error has been resolved and he will be notified of upcoming conference calls.
Wilson serves as vice chair of the PMA Board ministerial team whose work is focused on coordination and collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The ministerial team has met with COGA’s working group working on referrals from the OGA Review several times since January 2017, and are working hard to determine better ways for OGA and PMA to collaborate, and to clearly define the function of shared services and how to be stewards of the church when it comes to Per Capita.

Wilson and Barbara Gaddis met with the PMA Governance Task Force to discuss the PMA’s structure and how they can lead the corporate function of the church in the best way. This also relates to the structure of the PMA Board. COGA has been invited to work with the PMA Governance Task Force as they consider issues regarding the corporate structure, as well as its committees and officers. The overall intention of the review of the corporate structure is to establish parity between the PMA and OGA in the corporate structure.

Barbara asked COGA if there is an interest in moving forward with a conversation, given the work that is currently being done by other committees and commission appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). COGA members are concerned that the PMA Board Governance Task Force’s work on the corporate structure of the Presbytery Church (USA), A Corp, is an exercise in discerning solutions that the General Assembly has directed others to do.

After further discussion, Barbara Gaddis suggested that further discussion on this matter could continue Thursday March 23, giving COGA members time to discern the invitation received from the PMA Board Governance Task Force.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly heard from Executive Director of the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), Beth Hessel. PHS is currently searching for a funds development director. It has been difficult to find the right candidate. However, a candidate was recently interviewed who could be an excellent addition to the team.

PHS is moving forward with their strategic plan, and is on track to achieving the goals for this year. The first fund raising campaign has been launched; a gala event on May 4, 2017, celebrating the return of the Calder statues. The goal of the event was to raise $25,000. And $20,000 in sponsorships for the gala event have already been received.

The PHS recently opened an exhibit on the American Revolution, which was made possible by contributions made by congregations located in the original thirteen colonies.

PHS is applying for a grant with the Pew Organization to create a program to partner with local schools to share history with children in the Philadelphia area.

The PHS has received an increased number of requests for assistance. Social media strategies have helped shape what is posted on specific apps to better appeal to the audience.
Tom Hay provided an update on planning for Big Tent 2017. The theme is “Race, Reconciliation, Reformation.” Online registration is now open. Christine Hong and Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, J. Herbert Nelson, are scheduled to preach, with Eric Baretto leading Bible study. The Co-Moderators of the General Assembly will lead a plenary session that focuses on the intersectionality of issues we usually silo like poverty, race, immigration, xenophobia, and how these issues connect with one another.

Big Tent attendees will be invited to participate in conversations about race at local congregations on Friday night.

COGA members who are planning to attend Big Tent are welcome to volunteer. Kris Valerius is coordinating volunteers and would be happy to have COGA members part of the volunteer pool.

The Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) has been an excellent partner in planning for the general assembly.

Tom Hay presented the proposed docket for the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The docket will continue to hold Bible study on Monday and Tuesday. However, instead of the study taking place in committee, it will be done as a group.

The schedule for Wednesday has been changed. Plenary session 4 will start on Wednesday morning with the Ecumenical worship service, with plenary session 5 taking place after lunch. This would leave space in the schedule for a special event on Wednesday night.

J. Herbert Nelson has proposed that a Hands and Feet Celebration take place on Wednesday evening, with live music and a reflection of the work of Hands and Feet’s accomplishments in St. Louis, and set the program’s sites on the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore, Maryland. The celebration will also break up the tension of the involved work taking place in the committees and full general assembly.

A suggestion was made to schedule the Hands and Feet Celebration on Thursday evening instead of Wednesday. The celebration would then take place at the halfway mark of General Assembly plenary sessions, which would be a good time for rest and rejuvenation leading to the second half of the general assembly.

A motion was heard and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly-

**APPROVED** the proposed docket of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), with the Hands and Feet Celebration taking place on Thursday.
Tom Hay reviewed the list of nominees for Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly:

- Cora Brown, Manager of Administration
- Kay Moore, Manager of Assembly Business
- Jerry Van Marter, Interim Director of Communications
- Luke Choi, Manager for Korean Speaking Council Support
- Amanda Craft, Manager of Immigration Advocacy

A motion was received and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly -

**VOTED** to approve the election of the above mentioned OGA staff member as Assistant Stated Clerks of the General Assembly, as presented.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m. Leon Lovell-Martin led the prayer and blessing of the meal.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly was reconvened in plenary by Barbara Gaddis at 2:00 p.m. in the Iglesia Presbiteriana Old San Juan.

Pastor of the Iglesia Presbiteriana Old San Juan, Juan Luis Ocacio Torres brought greetings to the committee. The church was established in 1904. It is the oldest Presbyterian church in the San Juan Presbytery that remains at the same location. The first Latina woman to be ordained in Puerto Rico was at this church.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly heard from Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, J. Herbert Nelson, II. He shared the church is faced with the challenges of change. This is true for the wider church, and especially so at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

It is important to listen to different generations to define church in the 21st century. The Stated Clerk has spent significant time in congregations to engage people, hearing their views and struggles to help envision the future of the PC(USA).

The Stated Clerk reflected on the where we are today as a denomination, lifting up assets and challenges within congregations, mid councils and agencies of the PC(USA). He has identified opportunities to educate our members, train our pastors, and engage in younger generations. He sees opportunities to preach and teach in the wider church and offer leadership training at the Presbyterian Center to re-energize our pastors and leaders.

Congregations are facing challenges with declining membership, leadership challenges, complex legal matters, limited financial resources, and inadequate support from mid councils. Some presbyteries have a stated clerk and no other staff.
In October 2016, the Stated Clerk met with the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy to discuss the Hands and Feet initiative. The meeting participants were enthusiastic about the initiative, which will better serve the St. Louis area leading to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

The Stated Clerk is working with Cora Brown, OGA’s manager of administration, to offer training and education opportunities to OGA staff to help develop their careers with the PC(USA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly took a 10-minute break at 3:15 p.m.

BREAK


The cash position for OGA remains strong with 200 percent of the required funds in reserve. However, the reserve balance is declining due to a reduction in church membership. If the reserves continue to erode, we will be below the required reserves by 2020.

The 2016 Per Capita apportionment is $621,000 lower than 2015, approximately 5%. 79% of 2016 Per Capita apportionment has been collected.

Expenses are $408,185 over budgeted revenue (2.9%) as of December 31, 2016 as a result of uncollectable Per Capita.

Uncollectible Per Capita apportionment for 2016 is $570,632 greater than expected. The uncollectible reserve is now at 11.3% of Per Capita revenue, which is above the normal range of 5-6%.

John recommends that a new comprehensive approach to how OGA and COGA work with presbyteries, citing the value of services provided and outreach programs that are funded by Per Capita dollars.

OGA staff managed the budget well for 2016, with the end of year calculations showing that OGA expenses were significantly under budget.

Per Capita forecasting show that the current trend in increased budgetary demands for the PMA are unsustainable. We must find a better way to allocate Per Capita funds to better serve the church for the future, as stewards of church.

John is asking for COGA’s help to determine solutions to the growing uncollectible Per Capita funds and the increasing allocation to the PMA budget.

It may be possible for the OGA to add staff whose job it is to connect the dots of Per Capita and better communicate the benefits of contributing Per Capita to the denomination. A comprehensive strategy needs to be developed to show our members the programs that benefit from contributed Per Capita funds.

Barbara Gaddis has volunteered to help the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly create new approaches to increasing the receipt of Per Capita. Telling our story is
not enough. Listening to our congregations’ stories may be more effective.

Wilson Kennedy moved to create a working group to promote stewardship of Per Capita, building relationships and listening to the stories of our congregations. The motion was seconded.

A recommendation was heard to delay voting until more is heard about the status of the position for the director of Mid Council Relations.

Deborah Block, moderator of the All Agency Review Committee, joined the meeting via conference call. The members of the committee are currently working in subcommittees and are planning to convene as a full committee in early May 2017. Kerry Rice added that three additional meetings have been scheduled in August and October 2017, and January 2018.

The All Agency Review Committee does see restructuring as a possibility. However, they are doing their research with specific plans in place. Barbara Gaddis shared concerns that have come up at the COGA meeting including an invitation from the PMA Board Governance Task Force, Shared Services, and the apportionment of Per Capita funds to Shared Services.

The All Agency Review committee noted the ambiguity of the task set before the three groups that were created at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The All Agency Review has only happened once before. The committee is working to figure out the best way to work to avoid redundancies with the other two committees. And it is also important that the All Agency Review Committee and the Way Forward Commission do not present conflicting recommendations to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Moderator of the Vision 2020 Committee, Lisa Juica Perkins, joined the COGA meeting via conference call. The committee is comprised primarily of young adults and is ethnically diverse. Progressive and conservative perspectives are present within the committee membership, as well.

The Vision 2020 Committee has worked to definitively establish what they have been called to do by the 223rd General Assembly (2016). The Vision 2020 Committee has also been called to engage in listening sessions. The members will break out into regions to arrange for the conversations. The listening sessions will include time with people who are directly involved with the church, those who are partner organizations such as camp and conference centers, and non-Presbyterians.

The Vision 2020 Committee would like to meet an additional time to complete their work. However, their allocated budget only allows them to meet twice. Lisa has asked COGA if they would be willing to allocate additional funds to make that possible. Barbara Gaddis stated that COGA would speak with the financial team to determine if that is feasible.
Tim Cargal joined the COGA meeting via conference call with an update on the work associated with the Bible Content Examination (BCE). The Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) has requested the Committee on Theological Educators (COTE) executive committee create a task force to study the exams taken between September 2015 and February 2017.

Upon review of the four examinations, the task force determined that the mix of questions on the BCE administered since September 2015 were more difficult when compared to their predecessors. The task force also expressed concern that the purpose of the examination had become a “diagnostic tool for further study,” when the BCE should serve as a gauge of a student’s general Biblical knowledge. The task force has made the following recommendations:

- Committees on Preparation for Ministry (CPM’s) urge inquirers and candidates to take the BCE after a full year of theological education
- COTE convene a group of PC(USA) biblical studies professors and elected COTE members to:
  - provide a list of resources for BCE preparation
  - produce a study guide specific to the BCE’s purpose of assessing general knowledge of the “stories, themes, and key passages” of the Bible as they provide a foundation for Reformed ministry.
- The PCC return to the practice of publically releasing questions after their use in an examination.

The task force’s recommendations and rationale will be presented to the PCC and COTE. If affirmed OGA staff will make necessary changes to provide the necessary guidance and resources to CPM’s.

Kerry Rice provided COGA with an overview of the new staff members who have been hired in Mid Council Ministries: Luke Choi, Manager of Korean-Speaking Mid Council Support; Amanda Craft, Manager of Immigration Advocacy.

Mid Council Ministries is working with PMA to develop a new model for ruling elder training. It will be based on the ordination questions in an online webinar format. The online session will cover each question, providing details to help ruling elders gain a better understanding of the theology and history behind each of those questions.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly stated that assessments are in progress to determine the position description for the Director of Mid Council Relations, and what skill sets will be needed to successfully serve in this role. Part of the process involves reaching out to mid councils to better identify what is needed from the Director of Mid Council Relations.

In addition to the considerations being made for the Director of Mid Council Relations, it has been recommended that staffing considerations be made to better serve and represent Hispanic and young adult demographics.
Kathy Matsushima led the evening prayer and blessing of the meal.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly gathered for dinner and fellowship at the Parrot Club in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recessed for the evening at 8:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, March 22, 2017**

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly reconvened in joint session with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board at 9:15 a.m. at the Intercontinental Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, J. Herbert Nelson, II, and Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Tony De La Rosa brought greetings to the joint session. Hopes were shared that today’s community conversation will serve as an opportunity to discuss the future of the PC(USA).

The Co-Moderators of the General Assembly, Jan Edmiston and Denise Anderson, brought greetings to the joint session. They are both honored to serve the church at such an important time in the life of the church. The general consensus of our members after the 222nd General Assembly (2016) is that we seem to have turned a corner as a church. Dismissals are happening and funds are tight. However, many of the common contentions have quieted.

The Co-Moderators have traveled to congregations, mid councils and conferences during their time in office. These experiences have helped the Co-Moderators realize that we have a lot to do within our own context. Our congregations want to dive in deeper into being the church and acting God’s kingdom on Earth.

Conrad Rocha provided the joint session with a review of the work the PMA Board’s Ministerial Team on Increased Coordination with the OGA. The ministerial team has partnered with COGA’s working group, and looks forward to meeting on Thursday.

Eliana Maxim introduced the community conversation to the joint session of COGA and the PMA Board. The community conversation invites committee and board members, and PC(USA) staff to gather at round tables for a guided discussion on changes that may be influencing the future of the church.

Eliana Maxim invited a discussion about cultural shifts effecting our churches. Jo Stewart (PMAB) invited discussion about changes in the larger church context.
Chip Hardwick (PMA) invited discussion on sustainability and faithfulness.

The meeting participants were invited to share highlights from their conversations.

- We are not on a journey back to where we have already been, we are on a journey to something new. This would involve a willingness to be wrong and take risks.
- There is a faithfulness that comes with the fact that God will provide. But it is difficult to let God lead the way.
- The largest portion of decline is happening in white Christian churches. We are not lifting up the white church experience when discussing this decline, which overshadows the gains being made in racial ethnic and new immigrant churches.
- The idea of faithfulness and sustainability is that God is the source of our faithfulness and sustains us. If we know what God is doing, we will get to our identity and purpose.
- We may be missing an opportunity by not tapping in to resources for mission with those who have retired recently, to live out their faithfulness as they have focused on financial security.

- Sustainability depends on what we intend to sustain. What type of structure are we planning to sustain?
- God is doing the reforming. We could take more advantage of our global partners, being in more conversation to help us see other ways that God is at work, which could help us see things differently. How can we live into a posture of being open to how God is doing a new thing?
- Decency and order is a misnomer. Ministry is messy. There is something about being faithful in the storm. People are dealing with pain and we preach something else. Jesus met people where they were.
- The faithfulness/sustainability split is the difference between leadership and management. It depends on a leadership function of sees risks worth taking. The institution will not survive if risks are not taken.
- Faithfully carrying out God’s will leads to sustainability. But sustainability will not lead to faithfulness.

COGA and the PMA Board recessed for lunch and fellowship at 12:00 at La Plazoleta, located at the Intercontinental Hotel. Ken Godshall led the blessing of the meal.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly reconvened at the Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel at 2:10 p.m. Lynn Hargrove led the opening prayer.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly spent time to debrief on the joint community conversation with the PMA Board earlier today.

COGA revisited the PMA Board’s Governance Task Force invitation to COGA. A working group will be created to draft a response to the PMA Board’s Governance Task Force. Andy Brown and Carol McDonald will work together to create a draft response.
Barbara Gaddis proposed that COGA proceed in executive session.

A motion was heard and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly—

**VOTED** to proceed in Executive Session.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly convened in Executive Session at 3:15 p.m.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly rose from executive session and joined for dinner and fellowship at the Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel at 5:30 p.m.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly attended joint worship with the PMA Board at the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Puerto Nuevo in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The stated clerk and moderator of the Presbytery of San Juan expressed their gratitude to COGA and the PMA for the opportunity to host the two groups for their meetings.

The worship service was a celebration of unity, with the music and sermon offered in Spanish and English. The presbytery hosted a welcome reception after the worship service.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recessed for the evening at 10:00 p.m.

**Thursday, March 23, 2017**

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly gathered for morning worship at the Presbyterian Center’s chapel at 9:00 a.m.

The Committee on the General Assembly reconvened in working groups for the morning session at 9:00 a.m. Opening prayers took place within each group.

**GA Meetings Working Group Item 03-03 – Garita Room – C.**
McDonald, M. Boyd, D. Anderson, K. Matsushima, M. Elliott, T. Hay

**Statistics Working Group – Board Room** - B. Gaddis, A. James, L. Lovell-Martin, M. Mount Shoop, L. Hargrove, K. Valerius (conf. call access needed)

**OGA Review Compliance & PMA Collaboration Working Group (Joint Mtg w/ PMA Board Ministerial Team) – La Puntilla Room** - W. Kennedy, M. Anson, S. Anthony, E. Maxim, J.H. Nelson, A. Stevens, C. Brown, J. Wood
The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly reconvened in full committee at 12:35 p.m. with a working lunch at the Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel. Andy Browne led the opening prayer and blessing of the meal.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) Executive Committee joined COGA for lunch. The GACOR Executive Committee is comprised of Martha Ross-Mockaitis, Rubén García-Rodríguez, Michael Hauser, Marvella Lambright, Larissa Kwong Abazia, and Molly Casteel (OGA staff support to GACOR).

The GACOR Executive Committee provided COGA with an overview of the function of their work in service to the General Assembly. GACOR is in the beginning stages of drafting the theology for the committee. Martha Ross-Mockaitis, GACOR moderator, celebrates the opportunity to meet with COGA for the first time. Their goal is to have a mutual dialog, to partner together in fulfilling what the General Assembly has called both committees to do.

The church wide plan for equal employment opportunity was established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). GACOR is responsible to review the status of the Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity (AA/EEO) benchmarks and supplier diversity goals for OGA and PMA to each General Assembly.

GACOR is also responsible for working with synods to learn how mid councils are implementing functions that require a representation within their structures.

GACOR is working with agencies to determine how they are gathering their supplier diversity information to help create a process of doing so that works for all agencies. OGA has actively partnered with GACOR, to report on OGA’s progress on supplier diversity. Cora Brown has been an asset to putting this into practice in OGA.

Molly Casteel reviewed how GACOR receives its data for analysis to report on the representation of candidate pools to serve as General Assembly (GA) commissioners and elected members of committees and commissions. At this point, there is no way to accurately collect information on ruling elders for these candidate pools. Molly is currently working with OGA’s Mid Council Ministries to determine how this information can be available for nominating pools.

Barbara Gaddis has invited GACOR to join in the work of the Statistics Working Group, to improve the process and instrument for collecting statistical information on the membership of the denomination.

The COGA meeting took a brief break at 1:50 p.m.

Wilson Kennedy provided a report on the progress of the working group on compliance with the OGA Review Report and collaboration with PMA. The working group has met with the PMA Board Ministerial Team on OGA/PMA Collaboration twice via conference call prior to today’s working group session. The session answered the questions, who are we, who are we called to serve, and how to we do the work we are called to serve. There is a collective understanding that the current structures and cultures within the agencies no longer work,
including the current practices on managing incoming Per Capita.

The joint groups plan to work together in the future to further discuss and assess how to transform the culture of the agencies at the Presbyterian Center, and discern new ways to develop funds for the mission and ministry of the church.

It is important to continue the conversation to sustain the energy and hope to work together. Future conversations may benefit from having other staff resources to inform the conversations. We would be remiss in not capturing the momentum from the meeting and to take it to the next level.

An overview of the conversation will be shared with the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee.

Barbara Gaddis announced that Leon Lovell-Martin will serve on the COGA Coordinating Committee in place of Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo.

Barbara Gaddis reported on the topics discussed during Executive Session on Wednesday March 22, 2017:

- Personnel issues
- Issues alive in the church
- Shared Services
- An Informative Conversation with the Stated Clerk

No votes took place during executive session.

Margaret Elliott reported that the General Assembly working group review some of the Standing Rules that may need change or are no longer relevant.

The working group focused on three Standing Rules for review:

- Defining the meaning of concurrence involving who can send an overture advocate.
- Reviewing how we respond to requests for docket time to address the GA. There are unwritten rules to determine how much time is allowed. It may be time to revise the written rules and add new ones that may already be put into practice. The percentage of advertising time could be moved to another part of the General Assembly. Survey feedback showed an overwhelmingly negative response when lengthy films were presented.
- Adjusting the number of Advisory Delegates due to better comply with the 1:3 ratio requirements for advisory delegates to commissioners at the General Assembly (Standing Rule B.2.e.). At this time, two Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSADs) may be selected from a Presbyterian seminary to participate in GA. The working group recommends amending the number of TSADs to one from a Presbyterian Seminary; and one from another theological seminary in a covenant relationship with the PC(USA).

The recommended amendment to Standing Rule B.2.e. is as follows
e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: **two** one from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries.

The General Assembly working group recommends COGA to approve the above amendment to Standing Rule B.2.e.

A motion was heard and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly -

**VOTED to approve the recommendation to amend Standing Rule B.2.e. as presented.** The recommendation will be referred to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Mark Boyd presented a recommendation to amend Standing Rule F.5.d. as follows (deleted text-strike out; new text-bold):

*When the General Assembly is in plenary session, questions that touch upon constitutional matters, including rulings on questions of order involving constitutional matters, shall be handled by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. These questions shall be referred in writing by the Co-Moderator of the GA to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall consider each matter referred and make recommendations directly to the General Assembly through the Co-Moderator.*

It was recommended that the proposed text be changed to reflect Moderator or Co-Moderator. Tom Hay stated that the Standing Rules will be edited to reflect “Moderator or Co-Moderator.”

This recommendation will be reviewed by COGA at a future meeting.

Margaret Elliott reviewed a recommendation submitted by Andrew Yeager-Buckley to amend the Guidelines for Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs) as follows:

Recommendation to modify best practices when receiving requests for time with YAADs during General Assembly:

1. *We request that COGA agree to ending the Mission & Ministry Group presentations during YAAD Gatherings.*
   - *We will continue to follow the open meeting policy allowing for anyone who’s interested to attend.*
- At the start of every gathering guests are invited to introduce themselves by stating their name and the organization they’re representing.
- We will encourage YAADs that want to learn more to connect with them at the close of our time together.
- A resource table will be made available at the back of the room for any groups that want to distribute information.

The intention of the request is to keep evening sessions with YAADs focused on their experience at GA, with a space to debrief and share their experiences.

After further discussion, COGA recommended to strike the third bullet point from the text above. The recommended text will be as follows (deleted text-strike out):

1. We request that COGA agree to ending the Mission & Ministry Group presentations during YAAD Gatherings.
   - We will continue to follow the open meeting policy allowing for anyone who’s interested to attend.
   - At the start of every gathering guests are invited to introduce themselves by stating their name and the organization they’re representing.
   - We will encourage YAADs that want to learn more to connect with them at the close of our time together.
   - A resource table will be made available at the back of the room for any groups that want to distribute information.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

**VOTED** to approve the recommendation to change best practices related to access to YAADs during General Assembly, as amended.

The Office of the General Assembly requests the following amendments to the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly Exhibit Hall:

Add the following item to Eligibility for Exhibit Space – Item 6:

- *e. Organizations that sell Fair Trade items must go through the Presbyterian Hunger Program’s Global Marketplace vetting process and will not be accepted as individual vendors.*

Over the last few assemblies we’ve run into some situations where vendors that had applied for the PMA Global Marketplace and been denied have turned around and applied to exhibit as a private vendor. These vendors are claiming to sell Fair Trade products which in some cases the products in question are not being produced by a vetted Fair Trade company. I plan to work closely with the Hunger Program during the application process to help identify any vendors that fit this profile. The addition of this new item will help close the loop and give me a policy that I can point to if I’m ever required to deny an application.
The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

**VOTED** to approve the addition of item “e” to item 6 of “Eligibility for Exhibit Space” in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly Exhibit Hall, as presented.

The Office of the General Assembly recommends the following changes to the “Policies” section of the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly Exhibit Hall:

Recommendation to **delete** the following items:

13. *As directed by the 214th General Assembly (2002), any exhibitor whose organization files an Internal Revenue Service Form 990 will furnish a copy of the most recent filing of said form to the Office of the General Assembly no later than sixty days before the opening of the assembly. Failure to provide the document will result in forfeiture of exhibit hall space.*

Rationale: It is no longer necessary for groups to submit a copy of their Internal Revenue Service form 990. These files are now available to the public on the Internet.

14. *Exhibitors who are eligible for display space under category 6 of these guidelines (see “Eligibility for Exhibit Space” above) will be required to remit a deposit in an amount equal to the exhibitor’s portion of the shared costs calculated by the Exhibit Manager. That amount will be due and payable at the time the exhibitor executes a Letter of Agreement for exhibit space, no later than the date set by the Exhibit Manager for the return of the letter to the Office of the General Assembly. Failure to remit the deposit may result in denial of exhibit space. If, for any reason, the exhibitor chooses not to exhibit or becomes ineligible under these guidelines to request space, the deposit will be forfeited.*

Rationale: All exhibitors now pay in advance as part of the online registration system. There is no need to receive deposits from certain categories of exhibitors.

A motion was heard and seconded.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

**VOTED** to approve the recommendation to remove items 13 and 14 from the “Policies” section of the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly Exhibit Hall, as presented.

COGA heard from moderator of the Way Forward Commission, Mark Hostetter, via conference call to provide an update on commission’s work. The commission studies the function and structure of PC(USA)’s agencies. The commission meets regularly and shares the outcome of their meetings online.
The commission’s work primarily encompasses the following:

1. The cultural shift within and among the six agencies and other groups within the denomination.
2. Short-term structural and organizational changes using the recommendations made by agency review committees. Agencies will also be asked to determine what other changes can be made to improve the work of the national church.
3. Comprehensive review of the national structure with recommendations for the way forward. Thoroughly review the current structure and compare with emerging trends in denominational and religious non-profit communities, and develop comprehensive recommendations for the way forward based on research, church polity, and theology to ensure a flexible and relevant national structure.

The Way Forward Commission encourages people to share thoughts and concerns about possible changes and engagement with denominational groups and committees. A summary of the conversation that took place earlier today between the OGA working group on the OGA Review and PMA Collaboration with the PMA Board’s Ministerial Team on OGA/PMA relations will be drafted and shared with the Way Forward Commission.

Barbara Gaddis reported that the Statistics Working Group reviewed the history of the efforts to update the annual statistical report. With the help of Kris Valerius, the working group reviewed key statistical information. However, the primary challenge continues to be how congregation members are counted.

The working group has agreed to meet again during Big Tent, and has invited members of GACOR to explore the best ways to count congregation members. They plan to present a draft instrument to COGA in the fall 2017 meeting.

Cora Brown presented the proposed instrument to review the work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, as directed by the OGA Review, by approval of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The process for the review has not yet been explored, and will be finalized once the final instrument has been approved.

The instrument is presented to COGA for advice and counsel to guide the working group to finalize the review process for the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

It was recommended that reviews be given with a broad perspective by requesting the review to be conducted by a diverse group of people, including COGA, OGA staff, Ecumenical partners, etc.

The review will result with an objective score that may require a subjective response.

The working group will complete the instrument and accompanying process in time to complete the review process for the Stated Clerk near his 1-year anniversary.
COGA reviewed a letter drafted by Andy James, Carol McDonald and Stephanie Anthony, which responds to the PMA Board Governance Task Force’s invitation to COGA come alongside them as they do their work. (Attachment XX).

Wilson Kennedy revisited the motion to respond to the PMA Board Governance Task Force’s request, which was withdrawn.

Motion was heard and seconded –

A recommendation was heard to amend the last paragraph, striking the word, “Therefore,” at the beginning of the first sentence.

Therefore, we respectfully decline this invitation and hope you will join us as we continue to support and pray for the work of these entities.

It was also recommended that the response be delivered to the PMA Board Governance Task Force in person as opposed to sending a letter.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

VOTED to approve the response letter to the PMA Board Governance Task Force, as amended. The letter will be hand delivered to the task force.

COGA revisited the motion to create a working group to explore ways to promote stewardship of Per Capita. Rose Mitchell of PMA’s Office of Mission Engagement offered to assist in promoting the importance of Per Capita. However, there may need to be more conversation about Per Capita stewardship before moving in this direction, allowing time to establish relationships.

J. Herbert Nelson recommends that COGA create the working group in conjunction with doing something to help promote Per Capita until the director of Mid Council Relations has been hired. This person will work directly with the Stated Clerk and director of Communications to determine the best ways to lift up stewardship as it pertains to Per Capita.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

VOTED to approve the creation of a working group to determine how to better promote Per Capita. A broader conversation on relationship building between OGA and mid councils will take place when the position for director of Mid Council Relations has been filled.

Barbara Gaddis requested for COGA members to contact her if they are interested in participating in the working group.

The next COGA meeting is scheduled to convene at 9:00 a.m. on September 19, 2017. The meeting overlaps with meetings of the Way Forward Commission on September 19 and the PMA Board on September 21.

It was recommended that the COGA meeting convene on September 19 at 2:00
p.m., ending on September 21, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly –

**VOTED** to approve the time change for the COGA meeting in fall 2017, which will begin on September 19 at 2:00 p.m. and end on September 21, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

The COGA Coordinating Committee will work with the PMA Board to coordinate a joint session.

Having no further business, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly adjourned at 4:36 p.m. Margaret Elliott led the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Stevens
Recorder