

# General Assembly Actions Directed to Mid-Councils

## Ecumenical and Inter-faith Concerns

1. Encourage presbyteries to promote interfaith relations, dialogue, and understanding by creating committees, task forces, or something of a similar nature; encourage congregations to engage in interfaith conversations and partnerships in their communities; direct the Stated Clerk to encourage congregations to utilize the resources of the Office of Interfaith Relations to promote education about other religions and interfaith dialogue. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000294>
2. **Agreement Between the Episcopal Church and the PCUSA: ...** We agree that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery; We agree that The Episcopal Church will invite members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive Holy Communion in their churches and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will invite members of The Episcopal Church to receive Holy Communion in their churches. We encourage the members of our churches to accept this Eucharistic hospitality and thus express their unity with each other in the one Body of Christ; We encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000358>
3. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, in partnership with OGA and PMA, explore the possibility of developing a covenant relationship with **Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)**, in consultation with presbyteries having significant Indonesian and Minahasan-speaking members. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000476>
4. Urges its members, congregations, presbyteries, and national staff units, to reach out in open, truthful dialogue with our Jewish colleagues, engaging the issue of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Challenges dialogue partners to build on common values for justice and peace in Israel/Palestine. PMA to consider preparing study resources and urge presbyteries to provide opportunities for study to further educate church members about truthful, open interfaith dialogue. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000251>

## Social Issues

1. **Suicide prevention:** Encourage the leadership of each congregation to acknowledge the challenges caused by suicide deaths by addressing them in prayers, sermons, educational events, and conversations. Provide support for those who are suicidal or have attempted suicide. Engage families of those who have lost loved ones to suicide, responding faithfully to the impact of grief, loss, stigma, and isolation, all of which burden suicide survivors (those who have lost family, friends, or other loved ones to suicide). Acknowledge the church's role in contributing to the stigma and silence that envelops the topic of suicide. Recognize and share the Gospel message of life, hope, and resurrection... Learn how to recognize signs of suicidal intention and know local treatment and prevention services as well as how to make a referral. Participate in events like National Suicide Prevention Month in September, the International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day in November, and the Faith Communities events of the National

Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. Encourage church members to participate in training such as Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and Soul Shop training for faith leaders. Create partnerships with government agencies, legislators, law enforcement, schools, funeral homes, and national and local suicide prevention organizations to provide practical and spiritual help for individuals and families coping with mental health disorders and with loss to suicide. Host Suicide Survivors groups, suicide prevention trainings, and participating in community awareness of suicide loss and prevention. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000466>

2. **11-21** PC(USA) congregations take the following actions, as appropriate, to address the impact the **opioid crisis** and other substance use disorders have on our churches and communities: Encourage the leadership of each congregation to acknowledge the challenges caused by the opioid epidemic and other substance use disorders by addressing it in prayers, sermons, educational events, and conversations. Engage people with substance use disorders in ways that hold them accountable with compassion and grace. Engage families of those with substance use disorders, responding faithfully to the impact of grief, loss, financial strain, and other factors that addiction has on families. Recognize and share the Gospel message that is inherent in stories of recovery. Engage in practices that reflect the radical hospitality of Christ in the spirit of the Good Samaritan parable, including offering space for healing for recovery groups, transportation to services, and connections to people in the community. Partner with local treatment and prevention services for ongoing referral and training on how to recognize signs of addiction. Celebrate hope in Christ and affirm that recovery is possible. Participating in events like National Prevention Week in May and National Recovery Month in September. Train on the use of Naloxone (Narcan) and make it available in the church building for emergencies. Create partnerships with nonprofits, government agencies, law enforcement, and funeral homes to provide practical and spiritual help for individuals and families coping with substance use disorders. Host NA, AA, or other spiritual recovery programs. Host Nar-Anon or Al-Anon spiritual recovery programs for those affected by the disease of addiction for families and friends. Partner with local jails and recovery home operators to offer opportunities for spiritual and social connection after release for people recovering from a substance use disorder. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000467>
3. Commends the congregations and pastors of greater St. Louis for the Christian witness in their community ministries of justice and service, and commends all those who have engaged in conversations and education about the tensions of race and class that contribute to the need for those ministries. Urges greater experimentation in the use and transformation of church properties in ways that preserve Presbyterian and ecumenical ministry and witness in poorer and gentrifying communities... In specific learnings from the pastors and others who have shared information and reflection on their congregations' ministries in and around St. Louis, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) encourages other congregations to consider as examples...: those presbyteries that have developed overall visions for urban ministry and employ policies or principles to determine the use of funds from property sales in racial ethnic communities, are commended for those efforts... <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000287>
4. Cross-sectional task force to develop and publish priorities and guidelines for congregations, mid councils, and GA entities for the "Decade of Intercultural Transformation" and recommend appropriate resources to deepen understanding and skills for resisting discrimination based on race, class, gender, sex, or sexuality. Promote awareness of resources currently available that

deepen understanding of intersectionality and skills for resistance including those less frequently discussed, such as interfaith competencies so essential in these times... Include members of diverse intercultural backgrounds on committees on preparation for ministry, guiding candidates for ministry. Encourage synods and presbyteries to institute dismantling racism programs and encourage all staff and clergy to take the training every three years in like manner of PC(USA) mandated sexual abuse policy. Provide regular white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and antiracism trainings at presbytery gatherings. Direct GA to focus on planting new congregations, and raising indigenous leadership for all levels of the church from within communities of color, with special emphasis on the Latin, African American, Native American, and immigrant communities. Remove barriers and create pathways to full inclusion in the PC(USA) for congregations and pastors coming from historically non-white traditions. Strongly encourage mid councils and congregations to hold white privilege recognition, cultural humility, and antiracism trainings throughout the church and commit themselves to disrupting racism and intersectional inequality, including intercultural and intracultural realities. Strongly encourage the OGA, PMA, and the mid councils to promote integration of the Confession of Belhar into their study life and worship to celebrate its implementation. Direct PMA and OGA to equip congregations and mid councils to form intercultural coalitions, networks, new worshiping communities, and congregations across the church that worship, work, share meals, study, share communion, and advocate for racial and intercultural justice, with a respectful awareness and appreciation of each other's ethnicities, cultures, socioeconomic status, able-bodied-ness, gender and sexual identity and expression, and languages. Urge the session of each congregation, as well as each mid council, seminary, PW groups, and other entities, to take action to be intercultural in their life, work, and worship. Direct OGA to encourage, assist, and support presbyteries' committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry... <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000265>

5. Encourages congregations of the PCUSA to welcome **transgender and gender non-binary people** into the life of the church and to continue to grow in compassion and knowledge about the full expression of our individual and respective gender identities. Directs the PMA to consult with existing LGBTQ[IA]+ focused advocacy organizations to develop and/or adopt educational resources to support congregational and denominational learning, and encourages synods, presbyteries, seminaries, and congregations to do the same. Transgender inclusion is lived out in our congregations and Presbyterian institutions in the following ways: Welcoming statements that specifically name transgender and gender non-binary people as included within the life of the church. Policies that are inclusive of transgender and gender non-binary people. Available facilities such as bathrooms that are either designated as gender neutral or allow for transgender and non-binary people to use the facility that matches their gender identity. Worship, liturgy, and hymns employ language inclusive of all gender identities. Transgender and gender non-binary people's pronouns are respected and used appropriately. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000312>
6. The assembly calls on the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Public Witness), and all who represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to actively work for the protection of human and civil rights, both in the United States and around the world, especially the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups, including people facing **discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity**... The assembly encourages all congregations and councils of the PCUSA continually to seek to expand

their welcome so that all might know the Good News of Jesus Christ and encourages all other communions to do the same. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000313>

7. This is the time for us to act and intervene in the gun violence epidemic. We will stand in prayer during the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to share this overture, to take action, and to pray with presbyteries and synods, to share it in any way possible, and for every General Assembly commissioner, and to encourage every General Assembly commissioner and observer to continue to pray when they go home for a movement of the Spirit to engage our churches in study and action to prevent gun violence. May every congregation know that the whole church has prayed for them and for us to take transformational action in this gun violence epidemic. In love, may our churches help our country and enact sensible steps to prevent gun violence from murders, suicides, accidents, family disputes, and mass shootings. Encourage congregational and presbytery leaders to work with teen and young adults especially in proposing local and state legislation prior to and in preparation for the 2018 and 2020 elections, to hold elected officials accountable, and to ensure accurate historical treatments of gun violence are included in high school curricula; and to create opportunities for study of this issue in the local churches and at the presbytery level with an emphasis on the use of resources from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship; to strategize with ecumenical partners... Commend congregations, colleges, camps, and office facilities in the Presbyterian family that have voted to post signs on their buildings similar to the "No Guns in God's House" signage called for by the 221st General Assembly (2014) as a witness against the proliferation of guns in our society, and all other congregations that have studied, prayed, and acted on this issue in other ways, and pastors who include the mission of reducing gun violence in creating liturgies and in their preaching, and all Christian educators who offer gun violence prevention resources for study groups and libraries.. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000314>
8. Resolves to stand against any invocation of 'religious freedom' in the public sphere that deprives people of their civil and human rights to equal protection under the law, or that uses 'religious freedom' to justify exclusion and discrimination; Directs the Office of the Stated Clerk to send this resolution, with the rationale, to every congregation and presbytery, encouraging Presbyterians to distinguish between the historical understanding of religious freedom to practice one's faith and current efforts to discriminate against, exclude, and marginalize vulnerable people in the name of 'religious freedom.'  
<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000399>
9. Honest Patriotism: Members and congregations of the PCUSA are encouraged to be active in civic life, engaging in critical and constructive discourse and prayerfully considering the import of the Gospel message to our body politic. All councils, from local to national, are encouraged to be open and transparent in their decision-making processes. At the same time, church procedures and expectations of staff and volunteers should not infringe upon the privacy and autonomy that support freedom of Christian conscience. All councils are encouraged to seek out and learn from diverse perspectives, and to examine their current practices so as to ensure no voice is silenced, however unintentionally. All councils are encouraged to make whatever accommodations necessary to ensure the full and active participation of members in the decision-making process of the church. These accommodations may involve, but are not limited to, the dissemination of relevant materials, the translation of said materials into appropriate languages, and the scheduling of meeting times for deliberation. All councils should consider

part of their leadership to include a convening function designed to bring together leading thinkers in public conversation and constructive debate to engage members across the larger church in discerning what mission and discipleship entail. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000402>

10. Approve the following resolution: The 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the PC(USA) strongly condemns the unjust, racist disparagement of people and entire nations lately, promoted by politicians and government officials at all levels in the mistaken effort to place “America First”... Encourage PC(USA) pastors and congregations to publicize this resolution in their communities and with officials of local and state government. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000385>

## CALL FOR PRAYERS & INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

1. Encourage presbyteries, congregations, and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to: Continue to pray with the churches and people of South Sudan for an end to conflict, safe and effective delivery of humanitarian aid, a government led by servant leaders, forgiveness, reconciliation, accountability, and justice, leading to true peace and fullness of life for God’s people; Support the ministry and witness of our partners in the South Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the ecumenical bodies in which they participate; Learn about the mission work of the PC(USA) in South Sudan and continue to support PC(USA) mission co-workers. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000243>
2. Acknowledge that the Five Affirmations were one of the fruits of this church-wide discernment and commend them to all church sessions for reading and study: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/five-peacemaking-affirmations/> ... Acknowledge that many churches have continued their own process of discernment and some have declared themselves “Peace Churches,” while others continue to study, pray, reflect, and explore this subject in their own church community; Recognize and commend those churches who have declared themselves “Peace Churches” and encourage all churches interested in peace to continue their own discernment and further encourage the Peacemaking Program to maintain a list of churches who declare themselves “Peace Churches” on the Peacemaking Program website when they are notified by said churches. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000259>
3. Encourage churches to support relief efforts in Yemen through PDA. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000276>
4. Urge PC(USA) congregations and individual Presbyterians to pray for and with the people of Madagascar; learn about the history of Madagascar and the FJKM, the current realities faced by the people of Madagascar, and the mission work of the PC(USA) in Madagascar; support the ministry and witness of the FJKM and of PC(USA) mission co-workers in Madagascar; and engage in advocacy with their respective legislators to support democracy, protection of human rights, adherence to the rule of law, good governance, ethical business practices, and good stewardship of natural resources. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000317>
5. Call upon all members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—in faithfulness to the God of justice, mercy, and compassion—to take actions in defense of God’s creation and our own security, which is inextricably bound to the security of the rest of the world, to take all actions such as might be effective in requiring full U.S. compliance with the obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons... Join in ecumenical discussion at the highest level to develop a collaborative strategy with Christian and other faith

communities to effect the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the earth. Make use of resources within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to educate members about the existential threat of nuclear weapons and effective actions that can be taken to address and eliminate that threat... <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000318>

6. Designate September 2018 as a Korean mission month to pray for peace in the Korean peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean peninsula, and to reflect on the past 130 years of Presbyterian mission to Korea including both the positive legacies and also the ways in which mission workers might have contributed to the Korean conflict... Plan events and programs for the Korean mission month and providing informational resources to local councils and congregations. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000454>.
7. Invites its congregations to pray for the peace of Nicaragua. Pray for an end to the violence, and that our loving and merciful God guide and enlighten Nicaraguans in the construction of the path of peace, nonviolence, justice, and hope. Asks congregations and presbyteries to inform themselves about the tragic situation in situation in Nicaragua through reports from international organizations such as the Organization of American States and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000465>
8. Call upon synods, presbyteries, and individual churches to understand, condemn, and work against the ideology of white supremacy undergirding these racist immigration policies. Strongly encourage congregations to learn about the impact of these immigration policies on the lives of church members as well as members of our local communities, making use of resources listed below: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000471>

## CONGREGATIONS

1. Direct PMA to work with mid councils to facilitate an assembly-wide inventory documenting the physical needs of Native American churches and chapels and creating an ongoing fund for urgent and immediate repairs and improvements. The property assessments shall be done during that time between the meetings of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) and the 224th General Assembly (2020). The comprehensive report shall be comprised from the on-site inventories and shall indicate what repairs need to be completed for congregation use. Inventory—Intentionally working together, evaluation teams would use survey forms that allow for both check-offs and narratives of the situation of each church. Teams shall be led by individuals with the appropriate professional certification, licensures, or degrees appropriate to the work and may also include synod and presbytery staffs, Native American ministries committees, Native American Consulting Committee, Native American congregations, and special task forces... Repair—A means must be established to match identified projects with teams of volunteers capable of making the repairs, including Presbyterian and non-Presbyterian groups looking for such mission work. This is an invitation to the PC(USA) itself to marshal its churches and volunteers to furnish their labor, materials, and funds for mission work projects, especially to start with the most pressing and immediate needs. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000237>
2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) on its efforts to strengthen the mission and ministry of small congregations, including the progress of implementing the Vital Congregations and Christian Formation initiatives. PMA currently supports the ministries and missions of small churches through a wide range of ministries that

have been designed to partner with small congregations as they live into the challenges and opportunities of the present moment... <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000328>

3. Black congregations: Reaffirm COR requirements for inclusiveness as stated in the constitution (G-3.0103), paying careful attention to issues of inclusiveness and fair practices by the pastor nominating committees and committees on preparation for ministry; advise mid councils to follow the lead of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in raising awareness of the declining nature of black congregations throughout the PCUSA and the lack of pastoral leadership, both current and future, for those congregations; direct the Office of the Stated Clerk to respond to the presbyteries that the National Black Presbyterian Caucus has identified as not abiding by COR Representation Guidelines; OGA to report within one year to presbyteries and synods concerning the progress on this resolution and a full report to the 224th GA (2020); advise the BOP to analyze and report on the viability of African American Presbyterian Churches and the challenges of supporting installed pastoral leadership. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000486>

## DENOMINATIONAL

1. **Per capita** rate: \$8.95 in both 2019 and 2020. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000356>
2. Translation services: Encourage all councils of the church to conduct all meetings related to the ministry of the church in their respective jurisdiction in languages common to their constituencies and to offer simultaneous interpretation in those languages as well as American Sign Language (ASL) and provide captioning services for the deaf and hard of hearing community. All pertinent documents should be sent ahead of time in the proper languages in a format accessible to people who are blind and vision impaired. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000277>
3. Establish a representative Vision Team as part of the denominational structure that is tasked with shepherding ongoing vision discernment work, including engaging in discernment practices in collaboration with the six agencies and the mid councils; bringing recommendations about that discernment to the agencies and/or General Assembly; and communicating the unified, dynamic vision to the broader church. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000289>
4. Direct the Stated Clerk to commit the PC(USA) to complete transparency on the number of charges of sexual misconduct at all levels of congregational and denominational life and to encourage mid councils, while respecting confidentiality, to voluntarily submit the number of sexual misconduct allegations and charges within their bounds to the Stated Clerk to be reported to each General Assembly. Direct OGA and PMA to provide and, where necessary, develop pastoral, Trauma-Informed Clinical Care (TIC)- based and theologically-grounded resources for healing victims and their families, congregations, and presbyteries from sexual misconduct within the church... <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000285>
5. ACSWP shall work collaboratively with mid councils both to obtain feedback regarding work in progress and to disseminate General Assembly policies, working (as with pastors and presbytery leaders in Detroit and St Louis) also to help the voices and learnings from their local and regional prophetic engagement be shared with the larger church and society. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000427>