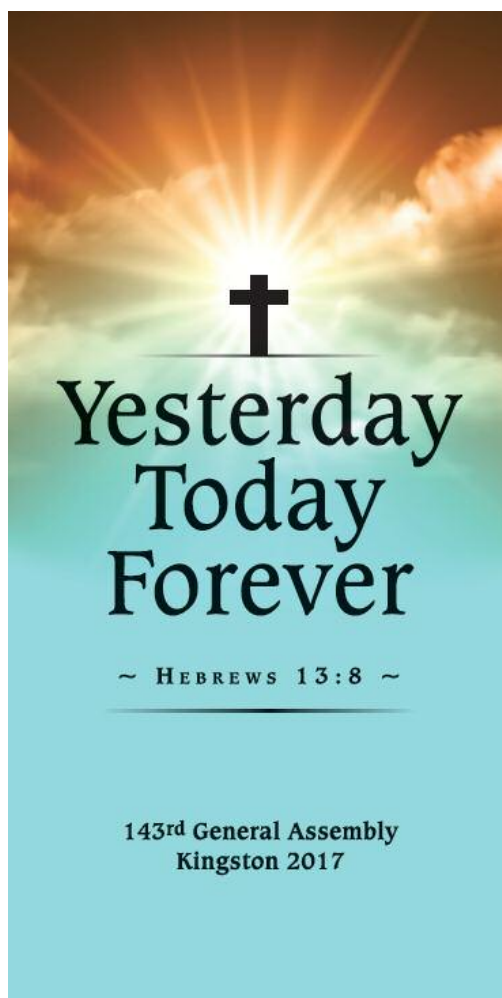


2017 General Assembly Report Summaries



The Presbyterian
Church in Canada

Welcome to this, the seventh edition of summaries of General Assembly reports. It is intended to help commissioners to General Assembly, and the whole church prepare for the 2017 meeting in Kingston, Ontario.

As you read through the summaries, you will see that the committees and agencies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are engaging in a broad spectrum of ministry and mission on behalf of our church.

These reports are prepared by the various reporting committees in order to introduce the business that is coming to this year's General Assembly and help you both to understand the work of the committee and to focus on the matters that need to be discerned by the Assembly. They are not intended as a substitute for reading and understanding the reports themselves so please plan to prepare thoroughly by studying the full reports.

This summary is also being made available on the website in order that the whole church can see the breadth of the business that will come to this year's General Assembly, and hold commissioners and the Assembly in prayer.

We welcome your feedback on these summaries and the Book of Reports, which is offered in electronic format this year, through the General Assembly evaluation form found in the Book of Reports provided to commissioners, or directly to the General Assembly Office at thamilton@presbyterian.ca or skendall@presbyterian.ca.

May God bless you and our whole church as we seek together to discern the mind of Christ at this year's General Assembly.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Kendall".

Stephen Kendall
Principal Clerk

COMMITTEE TO ADVISE WITH THE MODERATOR

The Committee to Advise with the Moderator is appointed at each General Assembly to meet periodically with the Moderator to provide support and counsel for the him, as well as to plan national and international visits during the year. Douglas Rollwage shared his love for God's word as found in scripture when he met with church partners, both nationally and internationally, and in his various engagements throughout Canada

Internationally, Douglas Rollwage accepted the invitation of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) to attend its 101st General Assembly. Accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Cheol Soon Park, Moderator of the 134th General Assembly, and Mrs. Karen Park, he visited the Sewol Ferry Disaster Memorial and met family members of the victims. Other highlights of this trip included preaching at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary; and worshiping and speaking in several churches, both traditional and new. The Moderator, following this trip, met individually with the Presbyteries of Eastern and Western Han-Ca to support them in their ministries and to promote stronger ties between them and other presbyteries.

In Canada, Douglas Rollwage stressed the unity of Christ's church as he met with individuals and groups. He visited a number of congregations – including a pastoral visit to Faith Church in Fort McMurray, all three theological colleges, attended CY, and participated in some of the General Assembly committees.

The Moderator represented our church at Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America in Grand Rapids and then at the General Synod of the Anglican General Assembly in Richmond Hill.

The recommendations in this report express appreciation to Douglas Rollwage as Moderator, and to those who supported him throughout this year.

The Committee to Advise also places before the Assembly the nomination of the Rev. Peter Bush as Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly.

ASSEMBLY COUNCIL

The Assembly Council report contains a broad array of items related to its dual role as an administrative and prophetic body within the church.

Since the adoption of the strategic plan for the church at the 2016 General Assembly, the Council has been working on ways that they can both live into the plan themselves and encourage its positive use throughout the church.

The Council acknowledges with gratitude the generous support of *Presbyterians Sharing*, and is also keenly aware of financial constraints at a number of levels within the church. A special committee was struck two years ago to work towards the 2018 budget and their work is present in the report. The 2016 financial statements, the 2018 budget and financial projections for three years beyond that are found in the report. The matter of the solvency requirements for the pension plan is also before the Assembly Council.

The Council is also aware of the work being carried out by the Life and Mission Agency and the Committee on Church Doctrine regarding sexuality overtures, and at each meeting has been briefed on that work in order to be aware of its implications for the General Assembly and the church-at-large. The Assembly Council is impressed and grateful for the mutual respect in evidence between with two committees as they seek to help the church discern its way in these matters.

The report also discusses the stewardship of the various benevolent and bursary funds of the church and responds to a number of overtures. Among these is one requesting the establishment of a Native Ministries Fund. The response recommends a readjustment to the allocation of funds from dissolved congregations. Another response recommends a new formula for dividing the premiums for directors and officers' liability insurance among the presbyteries and synods.

The Assembly Council is also pleased to follow the healing and reconciliation work that is regularly reported to it by the Life and Mission Agency. As the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) reaches final stages, the Council continues to monitor and report on that progress.

ATLANTIC MISSION SOCIETY

“The purpose of the Society is to glorify God and support with prayer, study and service mission endeavours through The Presbyterian Church in Canada”.

Our 140th annual meeting was held in St. Andrew’s, Moncton, New Brunswick, with the theme of “Follow Jesus”. President Linda MacKinnon presided.

The President of the AMS will attend the General Assembly in June. She attended the Life and Mission Agency Committee meetings and the Vice-President, Rob Griffith, attended the Assembly Council meetings. The President attended synod meetings and the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces in October in Moncton to provide an update on the AMS activities.

As a mission minded group, we support our overseas projects in places such as Ukraine, Malawi and India, as well as the many projects here at home. We support the three Atlantic camps, give up to four bursaries to students studying for ministry, and Canadian Ministries is the recipient of our knitters’ handiwork. The current Men’s Project includes refurbishing some of the residence rooms at Presbyterian College and supporting the ministry of Vera Blake among First Nations youth in Burnt Church, New Brunswick.

The *Presbyterian Message*, edited by Joan Cho, keeps us updated with articles from the Presbyterian missionaries along with articles concerning The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Our membership is down a bit this year but our prayers and support for missions is still strong in the hearts of the AMS members.

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH DOCTRINE

The report of the Committee on Church Doctrine breaks down into three parts. The first, found in the section dedicated to human sexuality, contains two substantive scriptural studies. One of these studies leads to the conclusion that Bible supports the current stance of our subordinate standards; the other argues for a revision to our understanding concerning human sexuality and marriage in particular. It is our recommendation that the church dedicate itself to prayerfully considering these biblical arguments. We have also offered a short study guide to help the church consider these two documents. Contained within this report is also a rationale for the church to consider a number of important questions at future General Assemblies. This is located in the sexuality overtures report.

The second part is found in the sexuality overtures report jointly submitted with the Life and Mission Agency Committee, also deals with human sexuality. As should be clear from the report, both parts of the church have consulted in good faith and both believe that the church must consider the fact that we have not lived up to the statements we have made in the past. Specifically, we committed to particular actions regarding the LGBTQ community in 1994 and we must consider how we have and have not fulfilled the spirit of those statements.

Finally, contained within the main body of our report is a resource concerning Physician Assisted Suicide. A multi-disciplinary team made up of individuals from the committee and volunteer expert consultants have wrestled with the reality that the legal situation in Canada has changed. The report does not recommend a doctrinal change to our position regarding end of life issues. Rather, it commends a pastoral approach that includes frank and faithful discussions within our faith communities. We also update the church on responses to documents we have introduced to past General Assemblies.

CLERKS OF ASSEMBLY

The Clerks of Assembly report begins by recognizing, with sorrow, the death of the Rev. Dr. Tony Plomp. Dr. Plomp was a Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly for 29 years. We thank God for his faithful service.

The report, which deals primarily with matters of church governance, comments on ways in which the Clerks of Assembly meet many of the goals and objectives of the denomination’s strategic plan and answers a recommendation regarding the time allotment for the General Assembly report presentations.

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The Clerks propose responses to seven overtures that address a range of issues: legal matters related congregational votes and the relationship between congregations and the denomination; clergy carrying vacation over from one year to the next; the possibility of equalizing ministers on the roll of presbytery; presbytery membership for institutional chaplains; changes to term service for elders.

The Clerks also propose amendments to the definitions for forms of censure found in the Book of Forms and suggest that overture and petition templates be included in Appendix A-7.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The report of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee summarizes our denomination's commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. We are a connectional church and our recognition that we are but one expression of the Body of Christ in a Christian landscape of rich diversity has always been important. Our primary historic ecumenical relationships and current involvements are with the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches. The committee monitors our role in various ecumenical and interfaith dialogues.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) will hold its 26th General Council in Leipzig Germany this summer. Our delegates are Hilary Hagar, Robert Murray and Stephen Kendall. An important item for the General Council will be the affirmation of the WCRC's agreement with the teaching expressed in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Through our Dialogue with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, our two denominations produced a worship service to be used by local congregations to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The theme of the worship service is the "Five Solas": Grace Alone, Scripture Alone, Christ Alone, Faith Alone and Glory to God Alone. This service is available on the church's website

The committee continues to support interfaith engagement with participation in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation and the Christian-Muslim Liaison Committee. The committee is also encouraged by examples of connections between faith groups with the local setting that are in the report.

Elements of the strategic plan were noted by the committee as we seek to be involved ecumenically and building relationship with interfaith conversations.

COMMITTEE ON HISTORY

The Committee on History has ongoing events and projects including:

- Heritage Sunday, the third Sunday in February, celebrates our unique spiritual heritage either locally or nationally.
- This year's history prizes recognize books written under academic, memoir and congregational categories.
- Unique celebrations this year: 175th Anniversary of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 100th Anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge and 150th Birthday of Canada.
- The five annual events commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The fifth event, *Soli Deo Gloria*, will be at Knox College, Toronto, on Saturday, October 28, 2017. Congregations are invited to celebrate Reformation 500. Information concerning the Reformation and *Presbyterian History* are circulated in the PCPak and are on the church's website. Thank you to the Rev. Peter Bush for his many contributions in this area.
- The "Oral and Visual History Project", involves interviewing our church leaders so that their views and experiences can be shared with future generations.

The General Assembly will be asked to celebrate and give thanks for those clergy who retired in 2016.

The committee has discussed our part in The Presbyterian Church in Canada's strategic plan.

The committee, as part of its mandate is connected to the National Presbyterian Museum, encourages congregations to contribute to the museum. The museum is currently located in St. John's Church, 415 Broadview Avenue,

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Toronto, and because the church has future plans for redevelopment, a new home for the museum will need to be found by 2018. The museum contains treasures and artefacts representing the church from coast to coast.

The Archives, located within the national office, is staffed by Kim Arnold (Archivist) and Bob Anger (Assistant Archivist). Congregations are encouraged to have their church documents microfilmed and digitally scanned.

The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History' annual meeting is where scholarly papers are presented relating to the history of our church. The next meeting is on Saturday, September 30, 2017, at Knox College, Toronto. A collection of papers presented in previous years can be found at csph.ca/papers.html.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The report begins by outlining how the International Affairs Committee strives to advance the strategic plan adopted by the 2016 General Assembly.

This year's report continues with the theme in last year's report with a focus on vulnerable groups and minorities. It begins with a prayer for hope and courage in times of conflict and struggle. Four sections follow: forgotten Palestinians, gender based violence, people with albinism and people with disabilities.

"Forgotten Palestinians" considers the treatment of Palestinians in Israel who comprise 20% of the population. As a minority, they face limits on employment opportunities, access to health care and other essential services such as building permits. A recommendation asks the Moderator to write to the Prime Minister of Israel regarding the government's responsibilities to safeguard the human rights of all of Israel's citizens.

"Gender based violence" considers the situation of Haitian women and highlights the work by church partners (through PWS&D and KAIROS) addressing the needs and rights of women who face violence. Women's organizations are essential to ensure governments are held accountable concerning commitments that address violence against women and girls. Recommendations ask the Moderator to write to church partners to express appreciation for their work and encourage Presbyterians to lift up in prayer the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25.

In some countries in sub-saharan Africa, people with albinism face discrimination and are at risk of persecution. Recommendations request the Moderator to write to church partners and governments in Tanzania, Malawi and Nigeria encouraging them to advocate for the rights of people with albinism.

Amongst vulnerable minorities, people with disabilities are the largest group in the world. They are disproportionately poorer than the general population and often encounter challenges to accessing appropriate health care and social services. The recommendation asks the Moderator to write to partners in Ghana affirming their ministry with people with disabilities.

The report concludes with updates on issues the committee has brought to the attention of previous Assemblies. These include climate change; the Arms Trade Treaty; the dialogue with Goldcorp; and Canadian Official Development Assistance. The updates on climate change and the Arms Trade Treaty include recommendations.

LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

Program Support and Administration

The Program Support and Administration report introduces the work of the Life and Mission Agency and outlines its mandate, notes staffing changes over the last year, and names the members of the Life and Mission Agency Committee. Additionally, the report remarks on the strategic planning process, human sexuality and regional resourcing grants made available to the synods.

There is one recommendation in the introduction to the Life and Mission Agency report regarding the response to the overtures received in 2015 asking for the establishment of a fund for ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada with Indigenous people.

Canadian Ministries

Canadian Ministries strengthens and equips congregations and presbyteries to seek God's will, embrace Christ's teachings, and live out the missional call of the gospels by providing resources that are relevant, contextual and transformative. Recognizing that God is at work in The Presbyterian Church in Canada in both familiar and new ways, Canadian Ministries works to enhance existing ministries and encourage/support innovative forms of spiritual renewal, community building, evangelism and mission. Canadian Ministries helps presbyteries to adopt a "missional culture that nurtures initiative and risk taking". In order to best support congregations to align themselves with God's spirit as it moves through the church, Canadian Ministries creates resources and programs that promote vitality and growth. The department provides online, printed and financial resources, but also relational support in the form of networking and mentorship opportunities, collaborative partnerships, one-on-one consultations, educational workshops and leadership conferences.

The work of Canadian Ministries advances the strategic plan in three key areas: supporting visionary leadership, educating for discipleship and empowering congregations and ministries.

Visionary Leadership

This section reviews resources and programs developed to encourage leaders to discern and follow Christ's call in their unique ministry contexts (Equipping for..., Presbyterians are talking about..., Evangelism Connections, Social Mentor Network).

Educating For Discipleship

This section reviews resources and programs designed to assist congregations and ministries to "deepen their understanding of and commitment to God, the church, and its place in Christ's ministry and mission". Resources and programs reviewed in this section include: reading lists, book studies, study guides, "Take It Up Tuesdays" Facebook posts, Canada Youth, Camp and Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators.

Empowering Congregations and Ministries

This section reviews discernment tools as well as programs and resources Canadian Ministries provides to sustain, encourage and enhance ministry across Canada. This section reports on worship resources, bulletins, These Days, congregational development conferences and 2016 grant recipients. It also reports ministry appointments made by the Life and Mission Agency, ecumenical shared ministries, property held in trust and members of advisory committees.

There is one recommendation associated with the report from Canadian Ministries regarding the response to Overture No. 18, 2016 on the decline in church membership.

Communications

The Communications department assists congregations, courts of the church, groups, committees and agencies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in communications best practices. The report highlights how the department has produced and promoted useful and relevant resources, both in print and online format, and has improved access to information through print and digital channels. Over the past year, the Communications team has helped to inspire the church in innovative communication techniques, which have equipped congregations to successfully share their mission and ministry.

Some highlights from the report include: details on how presbyterian.ca is a valuable tool that provides access to key resources, materials and event updates; the continued expansion of the PCCWeb network offering web hosting to over 320 sites including congregations, groups, presbyteries and synods; details of the resources that have been produced to educate, equip and inform the constituency; an overview of the new *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper; and information about the switch in resource distribution to Parasource Marketing & Distribution.

There is one recommendation in this report, encouraging Presbyterians to subscribe to free home delivery of the *Presbyterian Connection* newspaper.

International Ministries

The Presbyterian Church in Canada's strategic plan upholds relational connections that incarnate Christ's mission at the local, national and international level. International Ministries is privileged to be the point of connection with people and church partners around the globe whose vision and Christian faith inspire and give cause for celebration.

The appointments of short and long term mission personnel are the "living links" between us and partners outside Canada. There is a trend for shorter term appointments that you will read in the report. Jacqueline Bannerman is serving for nine months as a young adult intern in the Kalunba refugee ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Rorisang Kim is an international development intern appointed to AMMID for 10 months, a PWS&D partner in a remote indigenous area of Guatemala. Karen Harding from Guelph taught English to teachers of English in rural China through the Amity Foundation.

Dr. Nicholas Bauman serves as a medical doctor with the United Mission to Nepal, and his wife Rebecca is an occupational therapist. Together with their three young children, they are appointed for two years to Tansen Hospital. It is thrilling to deepen our relationship with this long standing partner of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, where Nick's surgery skills will be put to good use.

Another way of relating to partners is through trips and attendance at other special events. The Moderator of the 2016 General Assembly travelled to South Korea in September 2016, at the invitation of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). His visit was appreciated, strengthening the ties between our two churches.

In celebration of the Reformation Jubilee year, partner churches were invited by the Reformed Church in Hungary to a special event in January 2017. Joining representatives from around the world, we worshiped and visited Debrecen, known as the Reformed Rome. 2017 is also the 450th anniversary of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

History is being made in Taiwan, and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan chose this year to reconsider their mission. We were asked to send an Indigenous person, as well as youth and women delegates, to attend an event in February 2017. The three delegates were Lori Ransom, Dianne Ollerenshaw and Carragh Erhardt.

Justice Ministries

The report begins by outlining Justice Ministries' mandate and its relevance to the strategic plan adopted by the 2016 General Assembly.

There is an overview of the Healing and Reconciliation program. Carragh Erhardt was hired in September 2016 as the Healing and Reconciliation Program Assistant. One of her priorities is to involve teens and young adults in healing and reconciliation. A workshop was held in May 2017 for Presbyterian youth in Alberta with keynote speakers Shirley Dufour, social worker and residential school survivor, and Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild, former Commissioner with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Healing and Reconciliation Seed Fund supports Presbyterians working with Indigenous people for reconciliation; six projects totaling \$19,387 were funded in 2016. There is a recommendation encouraging Presbyterians to write to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs regarding 89 Indigenous communities under boil water advisories.

The ecumenical section focuses on the Commission on Justice and Peace (Canadian Council of Churches), the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, KAIROS and Project Ploughshares.

The report contains the response from the Life and Mission Agency (Justice Ministries) to overtures pertaining to human sexuality. The committee's response contains a biblical reflection, a review of life in the Christian community, some information about the law in Canada related to marriage, views of the minority submitted by three members of the committee and several recommendations about the unity of the church, blessing marriages performed by civil authorities, and further study. This report is followed by a response to two motions adopted by the 2016 General Assembly regarding transgender and intersex people in the church.

The section on ecology begins with a report on church investments in Canadian oil and gas companies. There is a recommendation that the Moderator write to companies the church has investments in requesting information on how each company will meet its requirements in the Paris Agreement, plans to invest in renewable energy and whether climate change is one of the required competencies for the board of directors. Next is a response to an overture regarding churches and passive energy buildings; the potential use of electric cars and the feasibility of electric charging stations.

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The report concludes with a summary of workshops and speaking engagements by staff in Justice Ministries and some examples of the church's public witness.

Ministry and Church Vocations

Ministry and Church Vocations helps the church to discern, prepare and support ministerial leaders. This year's report presents responses to two overtures assigned by the General Assembly and provides an update on the Employee Assistance Program.

Developing a Bereavement Leave Policy

Overture No. 17, 2016 notes that this church has not established a policy regarding bereavement leave for its ministers, employees and congregational employees, and requests that such a policy be developed and adopted. The response proposes a bereavement leave policy for ministers serving in congregations.

Revising the Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

Overture No. 6, 2016 focuses on cases when a minister serving in a congregation brings a complaint of sexual abuse or sexual harassment against a lay member, adherent or salaried employee of the same congregation. The overture seeks policy changes to shift the responsibility for dealing with such a complaint from the session to the presbytery. The response concurs with the need for special treatment of such cases and proposes the necessary policy revisions.

Employee Assistance Program

The church's pilot employee assistance program offers ministers and their families free confidential access to counselling and consultation. The report reviews statistics indicating high levels of confidence in these resources.

The challenge related to this program is securing its continued funding. During the trial period (September 2010–August 2017), the Life and Mission Agency has been paying for the program with bequest funds. The intention was to allow the church to experience an employee assistance program, hoping that if the program proved to be helpful, regular funding would be secured. However, there were no commitments in this regard by any entity within the church. In October 2016, in the final year of the trial period that is expected to deplete the bequest funds, the Life and Mission Agency contacted the Pension and Benefits Board to enquire whether the employee assistance program could be integrated into the church's benefits plans and the cost included in the congregational premiums. The answer to this question will not be known until the board has completed its comprehensive review, currently in progress, of the group benefit plans. Accordingly, the Life and Mission Agency has acquired funds through the Assembly Council to pay for the employee assistance program for one additional year.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) is the agency of the church mandated to carry out sustainable development, disaster response and support to refugees. PWS&D receives its funding separately and is not funded through *Presbyterians Sharing*. In 2016, Presbyterians from coast to coast contributed \$2,519,459. This included generous responses to the Alberta wildfires, Hurricane Matthew in Haiti and ongoing drought in Africa.

In 2016, PWS&D led projects valued at \$884,222 through Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). This was done with the generous support of the Government of Canada, the United Church of Canada and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Another \$265,722 was contributed to projects led by other CFGB members, which were multiplied for a total value of \$1,327,999. This included support for those affected by the ongoing crisis in Syria and food crisis in Ethiopia. Contributions from the Canadian government allowed those funds to be multiplied 4:1. PWS&D is grateful to the 20 growing projects in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Quebec that have helped make our work at CFGB possible through the growing and sale of crops.

The Loaves and Fishes Fund reached over \$2.2 million in 2016. Every year, one seventh of the fund is transferred to PWS&D's operational budget in support of its mission. It continues to be a popular option for donations of bequests and other planned gifts, allowing funds to grow but also to be used up within a seven-year period.

In 2016, the implementation of PWS&D's government-supported Maternal, Newborn and Child Health project in Malawi and Afghanistan began. PWS&D will continue to empower communities to support mothers and young children so they have what is needed for abundant life. This project is valued at \$4 million over four years; contributions to this project will be matched 4:1 by the Canadian government until 2020.

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PWS&D supports churches and presbyteries seeking to sponsor refugees – to provide a community, a safe home and a new start. At year-end, over 118 active sponsorships (covering 337 people) were filed under The Presbyterian Church in Canada's sponsorship agreements with the federal and Quebec governments. PWS&D remains grateful to the congregations, presbyteries and groups who developed applications, awaited arrival and assisted with the first year of resettlement in Canada.

Stewardship and Planned Giving

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. (Acts 2:42–45)

Offering resources to support one another is an important part of Christian discipleship. The Stewardship and Planned Giving department helps people use the gifts – time, skills, resources – God has given us to do God's mission and ministry at local, national and international levels.

This report outlines how the department cultivates visionary leadership to help congregations and specialized ministries design different strategies to encourage generosity through annual undesignated gifts, small and large project-driven gifts, major gifts and legacy gifts and develop best stewardship practices to help them utilize gifts effectively. The "Stewards by Design" conference is an effective tool to help congregations re-imagine ministry and find ways to fund it. The next one is in November 2017, and we are dreaming of "Stewards by Design II" for 2018.

Mission trips help Canadian Presbyterians embrace a missional culture that nurtures ministry initiatives at local, national and international levels. In June 2017, people will visit The Presbyterian Church in Canada native ministries as part of encouraging healing and reconciliation.

The department also encourages participation in the denomination's common ministry by encouraging annual and legacy gifts to *Presbyterians Sharing* and other national ministries. In 2016, people across Canada gave over \$9.58 million to support The Presbyterian Church in Canada ministries. Congregations, individuals and groups gave \$6,814,363 to *Presbyterians Sharing*, \$2,519,458 to PWS&D and \$253,409 to other international and Canadian special projects. In addition, over \$1.7 million in planned gifts (securities, bequests, realized annuities) was given to The Presbyterian Church in Canada ministries, including over \$1 million for congregations. Resources to promote *Presbyterians Sharing* include a brochure, video, general bulletin insert, *Stories of Mission*, posters and weekly Mission Moments (with PWS&D). The bulletin insert is also available in French and Korean.

The report recommends that the General Assembly thank those who faithfully supported *Presbyterians Sharing* in 2016.

MACLEAN ESTATE COMMITTEE

Crieff Hills Community, the national retreat and conference centre of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is located south of Guelph, Ontario in the rural community of Puslinch Township.

Every week, Crieff Hills through its facilities, hospitality and programs, ministers to a variety of business groups, charitable organizations, other church and parachurch groups, and of course fellow Presbyterians. Through its setting, symbols, staff and beyond, the gospel becomes a living reality and reminder to all who visit. We are becoming the home for a variety of new groups focused on prayer, mediation and spirituality. In 2017, Crieff Hills will offer the Ontario Jubilee Leadership programs and that is an exciting initiative for all involved. We are encouraged by being a place of choice so for many groups. We also recognize the need to reach out to other areas of life as a Christian witness within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The facilities are constantly cared for and upgraded by an exceptional maintenance staff. In the scope of a 250 acre property with 15 buildings, the above requirements would not be considered large. All major maintenance work as well as development come from fund-raising or outside support. The daily operations continue to self-fund which in itself is an exciting accomplishment.

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We are grateful for the tremendous support we have received from many churches, community groups and individuals over the years. This has allowed us to build new buildings, maintain existing buildings, administer programs and serve our church and the community beyond. We ask for your continued support as we maintain our sights on the mission and vision at Creeff Hills. We will always remember our past, continue with our excellent reputation in the present and look forward to a future that is challenging, exciting and fulfilling.

The Maclean Estate Committee is always open to input from our staff and fellow Presbyterians as well as those that use our facilities both indoor and out. Join with us as we move ahead through 2017 and beyond. We want each of you to be part of our exciting future.

COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE STANDING COMMITTEES

The Committee to Nominate Standing Committees is responsible for overseeing the nomination process and to present a slate for the membership of the standing committees of the General Assembly. In this report you will find a list of all the committees with the current membership, and the nominations (shown in boldface) that the Assembly will be asked to consider. The guidelines, that include the process by which alternate names can be considered by the Assembly, can be found in the Terms of Reference section of the Book of Reports.

The committee appreciates those sessions, presbyteries, synods and standing committees who participated in the nomination process.

PENSION AND BENEFITS BOARD

The Pension and Benefits Board is tasked with the administration of the Pension Plan, the supplemental Bequest Fund, the Group Life Insurance and the Health and Dental Plan of the church.

There has been improvement in the going concern funded status of the Pension Plan over the last year due to strong investment performance in the fourth quarter. However, the solvency (wind-up) position remains the primary challenge of the plan and as such, the church remitted special payments in addition to member and congregations/other employer contributions. In 2016 the additional special payments were \$600,000.

The board continues to review the sustainability of the Pension Plan and will consider provincial solvency funding relief measures in 2017. The next actuarial valuation is required to be filed no later than March 31, 2017.

The Ontario Ministry of Finance invited plan sponsors to submit feedback regarding options for a revised solvency funding regime and the church submitted a response. The Pension and Benefits Board is hopeful that “transitional relief” may be available prior to filing the next actuarial valuation.

There is one amendment to the Pension Plan required as a result of a change in legislation for the province of Quebec.

The board has conducted a detailed review of the group benefits plan during the past year in order to ensure it can meet the current needs of the church and its members and be sustainable and affordable for congregations and retired members over the longer term.

The Pension and Benefits Board is committed to communicating effectively with those they serve. Its webpage was redesigned and updated, making it easier for users to navigate and find what they need.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BUILDING CORPORATION

In 1968, Letters Patent were granted to The Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (the corporation). The corporation was incorporated, without share capital, under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act, and it is registered as a charity under the Income Tax Act. In 2014, the corporation was continued under the Not For Profit Act. Directors of the corporation come from all eight synods of the church.

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The corporation continues to fulfill its corporate and charitable objectives by currently providing assistance with church building and renovation projects to fifteen congregations and by assisting with housing for ten retired servants of the church. This year two loan applications were approved and three congregations retired their loans.

PCBC is working with the Life and Mission Agency to seek ways to implement this goal of the strategic plan: to explore buildings as tools that set congregations and presbyteries free to pursue faithful ministry.

As at December 31, 2014, the financial statements of the corporation were audited by KPMG LLP, Chartered Accountants and the auditors' report thereon is unqualified. The General Manager of the corporation manages and administers the business and affairs of the corporation, and he also serves as coordinator, Lending Services, for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. During the year, new loans were approved for nine congregations under the Lending Fund.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD INC.

In August of 2016 it was becoming apparent that economic factors were determining that the *Presbyterian Record* could not continue in its established format. Despite the efforts of the staff of the *Presbyterian Record* and generous donors, the internally determined target of \$200,000 per year from donations and legacies necessary to replace the projected decline in subscription revenues was unable to be reached.

With subscriptions to the *Record* falling below 10,000 and a monthly operational deficit of approximately \$37,000 per month, the board determined that operations be terminated. The final edition of the *Record* was December 2016. The winding up of operations involved giving notices to the staff with due consideration to statutory obligations and common law practices, together with the practices of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Presbyterian Record Inc., the corporation that owns the magazine, will continue operating until all its obligations are fulfilled.

REMITTS

The General Assembly approves changes to the legislation of our church. When a legislative change is proposed, normally it is sent to the courts of the church by the Assembly for "study and report". This provides an opportunity for the courts to comment on the proposals. Once these comments have been considered, the legislation, that may have been revised, is remitted to presbyteries for approval or disapproval. Hence the term, remit.

A committee is named by each General Assembly to review presbytery responses to the remits and reports to the Assembly. For each remit, the committee recommends that the remit either be approved or disapproved.

This Assembly will consider one remit: Remit A – regarding overtures and petitions (Book of Forms sections 65–80.2).

SEXUALITY OVERTURES, JOINT REPORT

This year there are three responses in the book of reports to overtures about sexuality. The responses are found together in this report, Sexuality Overtures.

1 – Joint report

This report written and submitted jointly by the Life and Mission Agency Committee and the Committee on Church Doctrine covers three topics:

1. How the overtures were referred by the General Assembly since 2015.
2. The history of the consultation between the Committee on Church Doctrine and the Life and Mission Agency Committee.
3. Homophobia in the church.

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The joint report has recommendations that invite the church to acknowledge its homophobia, to listen to the voices of LGBTQ people in the church and eventually consider an appropriate response, such as a confession, apology, and/or other appropriate responses.

2 – Committee on Church Doctrine

The report from the Committee on Church Doctrine contains two substantive biblical arguments. One presents a scriptural argument for maintaining that marriage is between a man and a woman. The other also presents a scriptural argument but comes to the conclusion that the covenantal nature of marriage does not prohibit unions beyond a man and a woman. It asks the church to study these two arguments.

3 – Life and Mission Agency Committee

The report from the Life and Mission Agency Committee contains a biblical reflection, life in Christian community, Canadian law relating to marriages with recommendations about the unity of the church and blessings of marriages performed by civil authorities.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE RE PENSION SOLVENCY

The 2015 General Assembly appointed a special committee to address the solvency funding requirements of the Pension Plan as well as to investigate options available to the church for dealing with the potential of a larger ongoing solvency deficit.

The special committee met with the Ontario Ministry of Finance in November 2016 to request relief from solvency funding but the church's request was not granted at that time. The Ministry is currently conducting a review of its solvency funding framework and the results may be released by the spring or summer of 2017. The special committee is optimistic that when the results are available, many of the plan's funding problems will be resolved. The committee is also hoping that the new funding regime will be in place before the church is required to file the next actuarial valuation.

Under the current funding rules, the next actuarial valuation must be filed as of March 31, 2017. If the solvency valuation indicates an 85% funding ratio, the church will not need to file the next valuation until March 31, 2020 and, more significantly, it will have greater certainty regarding its contribution requirements for the next three years.

In order to reach the preferred 85% solvency funding ratio, the church may choose to top up contributions by approximately \$2 million. Based on the advice of the actuary, the Pension and Benefits Board has asked congregations and other employers to remit contributions in advance if their cash flows allow them to do so.

The key factor at this time is to alert the General Assembly that the last date to make a top up contribution is July 31, 2017.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES

The Presbyterian College Montreal

This year's report describes the many ways in which the Presbyterian College is implementing the strategic plan. The college is pursuing six objectives:

1. Providing theological programs both for those called to ministry of Word and Sacrament and those called to other vocations. A new agreement with McGill University provides opportunities for a wider diversity of programs. Two particular areas of focus are congregational renewal and establishing new faith communities.
2. Establishing a Leadership Centre with resources for congregations, lay leaders and clergy. Leadership development is a crucial part of our work, and two new programs have proved especially effective: nurturing young adults and ongoing mentoring of pastoral ministers.
3. Creating an international place of study, especially through our Face to Face – Faith to Faith program aimed at welcoming and training leaders from countries of religious conflict.

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4. Cultivating ecumenical networks: Presbyterian College plays an indispensable role in the Montreal School of Theology and the McGill School of Religious Studies, and thus makes a valuable contribution to the unique religious context in Montreal and Quebec.
5. Strengthening connections with Indigenous peoples: We have adjusted our program of exposure to diverse cultures to put more focus on relationships with Indigenous people in Canada, and also through a visit and subsequent lecture arrangements with Yu-Shan Theological Seminary in Taiwan, which trains leaders for churches in Aboriginal communities.
6. Focusing on Reformed theology and personal renewal. Along with its traditional focus on Reformed theological education, the college places great emphasis on developing a supportive, prayerful Christian community.

The remainder of the report provides information on students, faculty, staff, finances and our Leap of Faith campaign. It concludes with a tribute to the late the Rev. Dr. Joseph C. McLelland and the Rev. Dr. William J. Klempa.

Knox College

As a founding member of an eleven member ecumenical consortium, Knox College contributes to and benefits greatly from its participation in the Toronto School of Theology. Knox College prepares women and men for various ministries in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and beyond. Knox graduated a total of 18 students in four degree programs including 12 in the Master of Divinity which prepares people for ordained ministry. The college also offers a Lay Education Certificate program through its Ewart Centre for Lay Education. Five individuals received Lay Education certificates.

Searches were undertaken and successfully completed for three positions at Knox. The Knox Board of Governors is asking the General Assembly to approve their recommendation to appoint the Rev. Dr. John Vissers as the 13th Principal. The board approved the appointments of the Rev. Dr. Esther Acolatse as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Dr. Angela Schmidt as Director of Experiential & Innovative Learning and Assistant Professor of Leadership.

Knox's goals for reimagining theological education for tomorrow continue to unfold. These include growth in the Master of Pastoral Studies, a program that focuses on social ministries and pastoral practices. A special stream, spiritual care and psychotherapy, is designed to ensure graduates receive the competencies and teaching contact hours, identified by the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario, as requirements for licensure. Graduates of the program can minister in areas such as hospitals, private counselling practice, correctional facilities and the military. Another initiative, enhancing our online program, allows us to offer classes in three video conferencing rooms. This technology increases students' access to theological education and opens Knox to the Canadian landscape and beyond. In recognition of the challenge to recruit gifted students as leaders for church and society, Ms. Megan Shin was hired as the Recruitment Officer and Admissions Counsellor.

The board is grateful for the service and skills of those members who are completing their terms. The continuing strength of the board's membership is vital to the strength of Knox College.

The board will have two recommendations before the 2017 General Assembly. Recommendation No. 1 requests the appointment of the Rev. Dr. John Vissers as the 13th Principal of Knox College for a five-year renewable term. Recommendation No. 2 expresses appreciation to the Rev. Dr. Dorcas J. Gordon for her leadership as Principal.

St. Andrew's Hall

St. Andrew's Hall is located at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Established in 1955, St. Andrew's Hall exercises its provincial charter to teach theology through its partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology (VST).

Some highlights of the 2016 report include:

- Enrollment at the Vancouver School of Theology increased in 2016, with Presbyterian student numbers up by 40% over the previous year.
- The Centre for Missional Leadership program expanded this year, including the full involvement of Dr. Darrell Guder as Senior Fellow and several new ministry initiatives.
- A review of the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart's service resulted in a recommendation to this General Assembly that he be granted tenure.

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- A \$4.4 million rehabilitation of the exterior cladding and interior piping of our residential hall was completed on schedule and under budget, significantly extending the lifespan of this revenue-generating facility.
- Operating deficits expected for 2016 due to reduced revenues during construction and personnel transitions were significantly smaller than anticipated.
- Budget projections for 2017 and beyond anticipate annual operating surpluses to support the preservation of capital, program growth and long-term sustainability.
- The board is grateful for the resources God has entrusted to us to prepare leaders for a church that serves the world God loves, including an annual grant from *Presbyterians Sharing*, which in 2016 represented 4.6% of our budget.

Vancouver School of Theology

Vancouver School of Theology is a theological graduate school preparing students for leadership in the church and the world. We are called to form and educate thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders. We do this work through our programs of theological education and Indigenous and interreligious studies. Through our partnership with the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia, we are enhancing our M.Div. program with the inculcation of practical skill sets appropriate to ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris was made Professor Emeritus. The Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart was reviewed for tenure and published *Lessons from Laodicea: Mission Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*. The Rev. Dr. Bob Paul gave his inaugural lecture and was installed as Dean of St. Andrew's Hall.

VST has hired a coordinator of library technical services to support online research and resources, and a Musician-in-Residence to enhance the worship life of the school. IT and library staff are shared with colleges in the Vancouver Theological Consortium. Greater cooperation through shared lectures and resources are planned with the consortium. The Principal has initiated an advisory group of experts from a variety of fields to help with forward planning at the school. Academic enrollment for Presbyterians at VST has increased from 20 to 28 students. There is an increasing variety of Christian denominations at VST with the greatest increase coming from the United Church of Christ. Jill Jackson, a VST student, won the *Anglican Theological Review* Charles Hefling Prize with an essay entitled "Reordering Desires: A Trinitarian Lens on Eating Disorders".

VST will confer honorary doctorates on the Rev. Christopher Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu at convocation on May 8 at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver. Donations remain steady at the school with a significant increase in the assets of the VST Foundation. VST has undertaken to increase the donor base of the school and to increase applications to funds and foundations.

TRUSTEE BOARD

The Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (the board) was incorporated by Federal Statute in 1939 by a Special Act of Parliament. The board looks after the investments of the national church, the consolidated fund and the pension fund. It is also responsible for receiving and dealing with the assets of dissolved congregations and from time to time is asked by presbyteries and other institutions of the church to hold property and other assets in trust on their behalf. This year's report notes that the board includes for educational purposes the discussion of environmental issues, social responsibility and governance.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The WMS Council will meet on May 18, 2017, at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel and Conference Centre, just prior to the third National Presbyterian Women's Gathering. The Council Executive met from November 16-17, 2016, at 50 Wynford Drive, during which financial decisions were made, the Budget 2017 approved, and various *Together We Can!* projects considered for recommendation to the Council in May.

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Sessions and WMS/AMS groups have worked together promoting mission through Mission Awareness Sunday since 2000. This year's resource with the theme, "Inspired", was based on John 6:1-15 and consisted of a liturgy, sermon and children's story that was written by the Rev. Joel Sherbino.

Glad Tidings, published six times a year, is available by annual subscription (\$15 plus tax). It is the magazine of the WMS, but it is much more than that. It tells the story of mission (with a much broader definition of mission) and of our overseas mission staff and partners.

Women to Women (WTW) is the new outreach arm of the WMS. Its initial work has been the development of *The Hub* (womenshub.ca) launched in January, 2016, is an online space for women to share their Reformed faith and how it relates to their daily lives.

The WMS is active in a number of women's organizations both within and beyond Canada, eg. Presbyterian Church (USA) Women, Mayan Women of Guatemala, Tumekutana African Women, Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, and the National Council of Women of Canada.

The WMS *Together We Can!* projects that were decided at Council 2015 continue to raise funds for the following projects: Mayan Women (Guatemala) and ARISE Ministry (Canada). A contribution of \$100,000 was given to the General Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2016. The WMS gave grants from its various endowment funds for individuals as well as for projects.