



MODERATOR OF THE 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Rev. Mary M. Fontaine, M.Div.

August 16, 2023

To: Clerks of Session

From: The Rev. Victor S.J. Kim, Principal Clerk

Re: Actions of the 2023 General Assembly for the Attention of Sessions

Dear Clerk of Session,

Below you will find the General Assembly referrals for your attention and action. Electronic copies of the referrals letter (and the documents noted for study and report) are available online at <https://presbyterian.ca/referrals>.

1. STUDY AND REPORT

There are no items to study and report from the 2023 General Assembly.

2. EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION

2.1 Recommendation ADV-005 (A&P 2023, p. 46, 12)

That the thanks of the Assembly be extended to congregations, individuals, presbyteries, synods, organizations, as well as the international, ecumenical and inter-faith partners who warmly welcomed and graciously offered hospitality to the Rev. Dr. Robert Faris.

3. INFORMATION/ACTION

3.1 Recommendation ASC-002 (A&P 2023, p. 54, 29)

That congregations be urged to have their session minutes and church registers (marriages, baptisms, deaths/burials) digitized and/or microfilmed through the Archives to ensure a preservation copy is created for these vital records.

3.2 Recommendation ASC-003 (A&P 2023, p.54, 29)

That congregations be urged to review their digital files (e.g., typed minutes, photos) and apply records management standards to them as they would to physical records and frequently back them up to an external hard drive or usb which should be stored in a secure location.

3.3 Recommendation ASC-004 (A&P 2023, p. 54, 29)

That congregations be urged to take part in the Web Archiving Program offered through the Archives to preserve histories, photographs, videos and other valuable material that is posted online to their websites or social media pages.

3.4 Recommendation HIS-002 (A&P 2023, p. 98, 27)

That congregations be encouraged to celebrate Heritage Sunday on February 18, 2024 or on another Sunday, as a means of celebrating the unique faith journey and heritage we enjoy as Presbyterians.

3.5 Recommendation HIS-004 (A&P 2023, p. 100, 27)

That congregations and others within The Presbyterian Church in Canada be encouraged to make contributions to the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre (PCHC) as it enters the final year of the campaign.

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- 3.6 Recommendation HIS-006** (A&P 2023, p. 101, 27)
That church courts attend to the Book of Forms, Appendix G, and be encouraged to understand the importance of well-kept church records and be reminded to follow the advice and guidance provided by the Presbyterian Church Archives staff.
- 3.7 Recommendation IAC-005** (A&P 2023, p. 109, 22)
That congregations and individuals write to their Member of Parliament to request a meeting to listen and to respond to the specific ways the Government of Canada intends to protect international human rights for the Palestinian people.
- 3.8 Recommendation IAC Additional** (A&P 2023, p. 23)
That congregations be encouraged to consider responses in their local communities to acts of hate and harm towards the LGBTQI+ community and sponsorship support of LGBTQI+ refugees.
- 3.9 Recommendation LMA-013** (A&P 2023, p. 176, 24)
That, in line with Call to Action 59, individuals, sessions and presbyteries be encouraged to continue learning about the harmful legacy of residential schools through resources provided on the Indigenous Justice web page of the Social Action Hub: presbyterian.ca/justice/social-action/indigenous-justice.
- 3.10 Recommendation LMA-014** (A&P 2023, p. 179, 25)
That the minimum continuing education allowance be increased to \$1,000, effective January 1, 2024, and that it increases \$100 per year for following five years.
- 3.11 Recommendation LMA-018** (A&P 2023, p. 196, 25)
That congregations and individuals be encouraged to advocate for legislative changes that would enable Canadian civil society organizations like PWS&D to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.
- 3.12 Recommendation LMA-019** (A&P 2023, p. 209, 24)
That congregations and individuals be commended for their generous support in response to the Ukraine Relief appeal.
- 3.13 Recommendation LMA-020** (A&P 2023, p. 209, 24)
That congregations and individuals be commended for their support to PWS&D's overall mission through undesignated ("where most needed") gifts, which were received at a higher level than in 2021.
- 3.14 Recommendation LMA-021** (A&P 2023, p. 209, 24)
That gratitude be extended to congregations and presbyteries who commemorated PWS&D's 75th anniversary by inviting speakers, using resources and by all other creative means.
- 3.15 Recommendation LMA-022** (A&P 2023, p. 209, 24)
That congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to name a champion for PWS&D to join its Champions Network.
- 3.16 Recommendation LMA-023** (A&P 2023, p. 213, 25)
That appreciation be expressed to the congregations, individuals and groups who support Presbyterians Sharing with prayers, financial gifts, volunteering for committees and working groups, participating in programs and advocacy campaigns for justice.
- 3.17 Recommendation NIM-001** (A&P 2023, p. 220, 28)
That, as a matter of urgency, congregations, ministries, colleges, camps, presbyteries, the national office, Archives and the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre examine their holdings to ensure they have no Indigenous cultural or spiritual artefacts taken without informed consent and if they do, that they are repatriated.

3.18 Recommendation SCL-005 (A&P 2023, p. 242, 33)

That congregations and ministers that are not part of Han-Ca Presbyteries develop friendships with neighbouring congregations that are part of Han-Ca Presbyteries through a variety of activities, including but not limited to, meals shared, joint mission trips and shared worship services; and that congregations be creative in telling the stories of the connections made.

3.19 Recommendation TRB-002 (A&P 2023, p. 262, 14)

That all congregations and presbyteries owning or managing a cemetery or cemeteries, send the name, location and a contact person for those cemeteries to the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada by August 15, 2023.

3.20 2024 Minimum Stipend

The 2024 minimum stipend schedule can be found at A&P 2023, p. 63 and at <https://presbyterian.ca/referrals>.

4. LEGISLATION (REMITTS, INTERIM OR DECLARATORY ACTS)

4.1 Declaratory Act: Section 251 re understanding of a Letter of Standing

Recommendation CLK-005 (A&P 2023, p. 89, 15)

That the following Declaratory Act, affirming what the Assembly understands to be the law of the church regarding the issuance of a Letter of Standing, be adopted:

Declaratory Act, section 251

While in most cases, a Letter of Standing shall only be issued upon the application of the minister, a presbytery, having pastoral responsibility and jurisdiction over ministers, may also issue a Letter of Standing on its own initiative, provided efforts are made to contact and discuss the issuance with the minister.

Yours sincerely,



The Rev. Victor S.J. Kim
Principal Clerk