

Proud to be Presbyterian!

Plenary Paper – Presbyterian Peace Fellowship



Presbyterian
Peace
Fellowship

What a great group of commissioners, committee leaders and staff! As an independent organization of Presbyterians, we have observed General Assemblies since 1944. There has never been one like yours. You not only are dealing with extremely difficult issues, but you are discerning the will of the Spirit while navigating technology, with all its pros and cons. Like others across the church, we miss the experience of gathering the Presbyterian family together. But those who watch appreciate seeing your work and participating in worship with you on Zoom. Thank you for serving at GA.

On peacemaking items coming to the plenary, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship commends the committees for excellent work. We support all of the committee recommendations on international issues, gun violence prevention and more. Each committee that we followed this year took their task very seriously, working through many complex issues.

As you move into plenary, we comment here on peace-related items, many in the Consent Agenda. Thank you and good luck!

Committee on International Engagement

PPF supports the entire report from this Committee. covering many areas of the world and many difficult issues. The overture and the commissioners' resolution on Ukraine (Items INT-14 and INT-19) are timely responses to an urgent crisis where our church can be a much needed voice for peace. We strongly endorse the committee's recommendation on INT-02, which recognizes that Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid against the Palestinian people, as well as their other actions on Israel-Palestine. After careful discernment and with the support of nine presbyteries, the committee overwhelmingly acted to support INT-02 with love, truth and courage.

Committee on Addressing Violence in the USA

PPF supports the entire report from this Committee. We especially appreciate the action on protecting voting rights in VIOL-06, the Presbyterian Decade to End Gun Violence in VIOL-07 and supporting the Guns to Gardens movement in VIOL-09. We hope you will take these ideas on preventing violence back to your home church for action. For our resources and training on Gun Violence Prevention and Guns to Gardens, including our Congregational Toolkit, please see www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence

Committee on Environmental Justice

PPF and Fossil Free PCUSA **support the MRTI Report ENV-10 that calls for divestment** from five companies. **We also call for support of fossil free funds**, as called for by 29 Presbyteries and Mid-Councils in ENV-07. Our planet has run out of time for business as usual; it is time for the church to divest now. [Find out more.](#)

Committee on Race and Gender Justice

PPF supports the entire report from this Committee. We especially share the concerns, hopes, and vision raised by RGJ-04, *A Resolution for Transwomen of Color*, which directs the six agencies of the PCUSA to address the needs that exist at the intersection of race and gender identity when it comes to our own denomination's cultural humility trainings, employment protections, and physical meeting spaces.

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Committee on Immigration

No committee spent more time on careful consideration of each item of business than the IMM committee did – listening to overture advocates and resource people and thoughtfully considering how to respond. **We support all of their actions**, and highlight their recommendation on IMM-06 to declare the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be a Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church. The support for and solidarity with congregations and members engaged in these ministries must be clear and certain.

Committee on Theology, Worship and Education

PPF asks commissioners to pay particular attention to the comments accompanying TWE-04, *Regarding Worship Resources for Ministering to Veterans*. The committee's comments note the need for resources to enable those considering military service to fully understand and reflect on the kind of actions they may be required to perform *before* they enlist, and the need for resources for those leaving the military as conscientious objectors.

Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Engagement

As peacemakers, PPF supports the action of this Committee to approve ECU-06 and ECU-08. We believe that distributing the document on Denouncing Antisemitism and Islamophobia in ECU-06 will be helpful to congregations and that the call to support Palestinian Christians at the World Council of Churches in ECU-08 is a positive step.

Committee on Health, Safety and Benefits

PPF supports the original report and recommendation from the General Assembly Family Leave Policy Task Force for specifying 12 weeks of paid family leave. When this report was first published, our organization followed this proposal and updated our leave policy for our staff to 12 weeks of paid family leave. Our experience tells us that this is a good policy. We encourage the plenary to amend the Committee recommendation to specify 12 weeks of paid family medical leave, as in the original recommendation.

Who We Are: Founded in 1944, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is a nation-wide community of Presbyterians who believe that Jesus calls the church to help reduce war, violence and exploitation. We are a non-partisan group, open to all Presbyterians. Except for a small staff, we are volunteers. We are all ages! We do not work for or represent any government or outside lobby group. Because of our focus on peacemaking, we have divested our Peace Fellowship Endowment Fund at the Presbyterian Foundation of all fossil fuel companies and over 20 companies that profit from or enable the Occupation of Palestine by Israel. Many of us are former GA Commissioners or Advisory Delegates who seek to enact the peacemaking witness of the PCUSA. Join us!

Be Bold! Nonviolence Works. See www.presbypeacefellowship.org