

Synod of the Covenant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **What decision has the Administrative Commission made?** The Administrative Commission has determined that there is systemic disorder in the operation of the Synod, and that the Synod is not capable under its current configuration to achieve reconciliation. As a result, the Administrative Commission has assumed jurisdiction of the Synod of the Covenant. A formal announcement of the Administrative Commission's actions can be found here: <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2020/2/14/administrative-commission-general-assembly-takes-n/>.
2. **What does it mean that the Administrative Commission has assumed jurisdiction of the Synod?** Under the Presbyterian Church's system of government, it means that the Administrative Commission has taken over the functioning of the Synod and is operating as the governing body for the Synod of the Covenant. The Administrative Commission acts as the Assembly of the Synod. All former officers of the Synod have been removed and replaced.
3. **What right does the Administrative Commission have to make decisions instead of the Synod?** Administrative Commissions are part of the connectional life of our church. The Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Book of Order provides for the creation and functioning of administrative commissions. G-3.0109. Specifically, functions "that may be entrusted to [an] administrative commission[] include . . . visiting particular councils . . . reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein . . ." An advisory opinion that describes the functioning and authority of an administrative commission can be found here:
https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory-opinion03.pdf.
4. **What about my service as a commissioner or on the committees on which I serve?** As noted above, the Administrative Commission has stepped into the shoes of the Assembly of the Synod of the Covenant, including that of the commissioners and committees. The Administrative Commission views this as a temporary, but important, step. As the work of reconciliation and healing takes shape, jurisdiction may be returned to persons in the bounds of the synod. Presbyteries will be asked to affirm their Commissioners already elected to the Synod Assembly or take action to elect new Commissioners. *The Synod Permanent Judicial Commission remains in place as previously elected, now supported by a newly elected Stated Clerk.*
5. **What will happen to the Synod employees?** The service of the Synod staff has been concluded and they have been offered severance packages as appropriate. The new Personnel Services Committee is working on locating new persons to fill certain positions.
6. **What about upcoming Synod assembly meetings?** For the time being, the Administrative Commission acting as Synod of the Covenant has suspended most operations of the Synod of the Covenant. This includes the next two meetings of the assembly, including the meeting in March, 2020. We will resume meetings as soon as practicable.
7. **What about other Synod activities?** As stated, the Administrative Commission has suspended all programming and activities of the Synod.

8. **When will the Synod become functioning again?** The Administrative Commission will work as expeditiously as possible to establish transitional leadership and resume operations of the Synod. However, the Administrative Commission believes that it will require considerable work on the part of all concerned to undertake reconciliation and healing and to address the systemic disorder which has characterized the Synod for a significant period of time.
9. **What are the steps that the Administrative Commission expects to take to restore the functioning of the Synod?** The Administrative Commission expects to engage the services of a faith-based professional mediation firm to assist the Synod in discernment, reconciliation, conflict management, and mission study. Once the work of reconciliation is underway, it will be appropriate to work to confirm a new Spirit-inspired mission and ministry, followed by alignment of structure and programming.
10. **How do I reach the Commission?**
The Administrative Commission, acting as the Synod Assembly, may be reached via email: ac.covenant@pcusa.org. The synod's mailing address is now:
Synod of the Covenant, P.O. Box 2751, Toledo, OH 43606