

OUR PURPOSE

*The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders
to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

OUR VISION

*Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives
as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader
in ministering together.*

MINUTES

The Presbytery of Geneva held a duly-called Meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021, held electronically via Zoom.us.

GATHERING FOR SHARED WORK: OPENING BUSINESS

GATHERING

11:15 am Registration and Fellowship Time (through 11:30 am)

CALL TO ORDER

RE Virginia Champlin (Geneva), Moderator, called the meeting to order at 11:30 am, a quorum being present. CRE Bessie Tyrrell (Atlanta) offered a brief devotional and the opening prayer.

ROLL

CONGREGATIONS: MINISTERS & COMMISSIONERS (CM = Corresponding Member; CP = Commissioned Pastor)

CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER	CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER
ADDISON	A - Peter Marr (CM)		MARION, UNITED	A - Denise Logan (CM)	A - Frank Halstead
ANDOVER, FIRST	A - C. Mattison		MORELAND	A - Paul Yoder (CRE)	
ARKPORT, FIRST	A - Bruce Incze	A - Lorraine Glidden	NAPLES, TRINITY FEDERATED	EX - Robin Lostetter	A - Jessie Olney
ATLANTA	----	Robert Bidlack	NEWARK, PARK	----	
BATH, FIRST	----		OAKS CORNERS	A - Karl Warrington	
BELLONA, MEMORIAL	Amy Loving Austin	Jane Hansen	ONTARIO CENTER, FIRST	Deborah Grohman	
BIG FLATS, FIRST	A - Denise Stone	A - Robin Fitzgerald	OVID, FEDERATED	A - Rob Mellgard	A - Judy Mellgard
BURDETT	A - Richard Evans (CRE)	A - Martha Evans	PAINTED POST, UNITED	EX - David Preisendanz	
CANANDAIGUA, UNITED	A - Wade Allen (CM)		PALMYRA, WESTERN	----	Philip Opdycke
CANISTEO, FIRST	A - Michelle Serra (G)		PENN YAN, FIRST	A - Paul Malles	A - Rob Anderson
COHOCTON, FIRST	----	Linda Hodges	PHELPS, UNITED	----	A - Margaret Carlson
CORNING, FIRST	A - Jeffrey Ugoretz	Kay Rogus	PRATTSBURGH, FIRST	----	
EAST PALMYRA, FIRST	----		PULTENEY, FIRST	A - Don Peek (CRE)	A - Mary Jane Peek
ELMIRA, FIRST	A - Bill Reynolds (CM)	Chuck Stewart	RED CREEK	A - Carleen Frost (CRE)	
ELMIRA, NORTH	Evan Hansen	Annie LeFevre	ROCK STREAM	A - Lucinda O'Leary (CM)	
GENEVA, THE PC	A - Colin Pritchard	A - Chris Gerling	SENECA #9	Amy Loving Austin	EX - Pam Ells

HAMMONDSPORT, FIRST	----		SENECA FALLS, FIRST	Leah Ntuala	A - Susan Derr
HECTOR	A - Ben Masters		SHORTSVILLE, FIRST	A - Connie Franks (CRE)	
HORNELL, UNITED	EX - Katherine Griffis	Lisa Sanford	SODUS, FIRST	Gail Heimberger	
HORSEHEADS, FIRST	Aaron Frank	EX - Judy Sell	SPENCER, CHRIST THE KING FELLOWSHIP	Sabrina Slater	A - Kern Bossard
HOWARD, UNION	----		TRUMANSBURG, FIRST ULYSSES	A - Daniel Russell	A - Pamela Postle
HURON	A - Nancy Farrell	A - Linda Hayes	WATERLOO, FIRST	A - Anita Milne	
ITHACA, FIRST	A - Cynthia Weaver A - Kirianne Weaver	A - Gail Farnham	WATKINS GLEN, FIRST	A - Cara Milne	A - Patti Smith
JASPER, UNITED	A - Brain Dieffenbacher (CM)		WESTON	----	Barry Winters
JUNIUS	A - Ellen Donnan	A - Harriet Haynes	WOLCOTT, FIRST	Walter Stuber (CM)	A - Dolores Gingerich
LYONS, FIRST	----	Joanne Reinhardt			

MINISTERS IN VALIDATED MINISTRIES / MINISTERS AT-LARGE / HONORABLY RETIRED MINISTERS

Present:

Glenn Kennedy (AL) David Ashby (VM) Jim Hicks (HR)

Excused:

Betsey Crimmins (HR) Harold Delhagen (AL) Adrian Tierson (VM) Janice Fitzgerald (VM)
Cynthia Huling Hummel (HR) Carol Wilson (HR)

ADDITIONAL ELDER COMMISSIONERS (appointed by Presbytery to correct elder-clergy imbalance)

Present:

Virginia Champlin (Geneva) Ken Allen (Canandaigua, United) Bob Sell (Horseheads, First)
Bessie Tyrrell (Atlanta) Irene Fadden (Palmyra, Western)

Excused:

Susan Frost (Geneva Presbytery)

PRESBYTERY STAFF (granted voice)

Elena Delhagen (Palmyra, Western)

REGISTERED GUESTS (Current Meeting; not granted voice or vote)

Joseph Kohler

SUMMARIES FOR EACH MEETING 2021	Jan 23	Mar 23	May 25	Aug 24	Sept 28	Oct 26	Nov 22
Total Minister Commissioners Present*	33	34	23	11	26	11	
Total Elder Commissioners Present **	37	41	40	14	39	15	
Parity (expressed in terms of Elders, + or -)	+4	+7	+17	+3	+13	+5	
Total Minister Commissioners Absent, Unexcused***	1	2	12	15	6	22	
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders****	28	23	24	42	25	41	
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders and Pastors****	15	12	17	35	16	35	
Total Registered Visitors and Staff	12	5	8	5	10	2	
Total Registered Attendance*****	82	80	71	30	77	28	

* Does not include Corresponding Members, with voice, not vote. Does include Validated, At-large, and Honorably Retired

** Includes Corresponding Members with voice and vote

*** Does not include Corresponding Members with voice only; Honorably Retired Ministers; and Excused Minister Members.
**** Includes churches marked "excused"; does **not** include Additional Elder Commissioners, as they are not elected by sessions.
***** Includes Corresponding Members without vote

INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

The Moderator declared the quorum.

The Stated Clerk read the Presbytery's Purpose and Vision Statements.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET

The presbytery VOTED to approve the docket for the meeting:

11:15 AM	Registration and fellowship time (through 11:30 AM)
11:30 AM	Call to Order
	Opening Prayer and Devotions [CRE Bessie Tyrrell (Atlanta)]
11:35 AM	Introductory Business
	Declaration of Quorum
	Reading of Purpose and Vision Statements
	Approval of the Docket
	Acknowledgment of the First Stewards of the Land
11:40 AM	Business Related to Congregations and Leaders
	Creation of an Administrative Commission for Atlanta Presbyterian Church
12:00 PM	Benediction and Adjournment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FIRST STEWARDS OF THE LAND

The Moderator offered acknowledgement of the first stewards of the land, the Seneca and Cayuga tribes, where we live and serve.

BUSINESS RELATED TO CONGREGATIONS AND LEADERS

CRE Bessie Tyrrell presented the motion to form an Administrative Commission for the Atlanta Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, New York, that will assume original jurisdiction, and to establish the charge for the work of that Administrative Commission.

The motion was seconded, and the floor was opened for discussion.

Joseph Kohler said that he had questions about the motion. He demanded to know why "the minutes of the last church meeting" were not provided (they were not relevant to this Presbytery meeting); he also requested a list of all persons present at the Presbytery meeting and their contact information (his request was denied; names are provided in the minutes, but contact information is not public). When repeatedly asked by the Moderator and the Stated Clerk to identify himself and provide his church of membership, Mr. Kohler refused, claiming that he had already provided that information when he registered for the meeting. The Presbytery Administrator (who manages the registration for Presbytery meetings via Zoom) shared his registration information with the Stated Clerk, who determined that he was not a member of any church in the Presbytery of Geneva; this was confirmed by Mr. Kohler. He was therefore clearly identified to be a guest who did not have voice or vote granted to him by the Presbytery assembly, so the Moderator proceeded with discussion on the motion by the members of the Presbytery of Geneva.

Following discussion, the Presbytery VOTED to **form** an Administrative Commission for the Atlanta Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, New York, that will assume original jurisdiction, and to **establish** the following charge for the work of that Administrative Commission:

Administrative Commission for Atlanta Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, NY CHARGE FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Approved by the Presbytery of Geneva during the called meeting on October 26, 2021.

The Presbytery of Geneva **establishes the following charge** for the work of the Administrative Commission for Atlanta Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, NY.

BACKGROUND

In September of 2021, the COM learned that, following the deaths of several church members, the Atlanta Presbyterian Church now consists solely of 4 active members.

On September 28, 2021, the congregation of the Atlanta Presbyterian Church voted to request that the Presbytery of Geneva dissolve the congregation and form an Administrative Commission to take the required steps to close the Atlanta Presbyterian Church and sell the church property with grace.

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

In accordance with our Manual of Administrative Operations, “the Moderator will appoint the membership of the commission, in consultation with the Stated Clerk and the Committee on Ministry.” The Stated Clerk will orient the administrative commission, who will then choose a chair and a clerk, and set a date for the first meeting of the commission.

The Moderator has appointed the following persons to serve on the Administrative Commission for Atlanta:

1. TE David Ashby (At Large)
2. TE Katherine Griffis (Hornell, United)
3. RE Catherine Foerster (Penn Yan, First)
4. RE Lynn Dinehart (Prattsburgh, First)
5. RE Bob Bidlack (Atlanta)

The quorum for meetings of the Administrative Commission will be three members.

**CHARGE FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION
FOR ATLANTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ATLANTA, NY**

NOTE: This charge - in accordance with *Book of Order* G-3.0303 - *does* grant the Administrative Commission original jurisdiction of all responsibilities of the session (see [Book of Order](#) G-3.02 for full list of responsibilities).

Moreover, the duties outlined below are designed to *guide* the Administrative Commission in their work as they assume the responsibility of the session and take the appropriate steps to dissolve the congregation.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

1. The Administrative Commission shall confirm to the presbytery through the stated clerk, a moderator and a clerk of the Commission.
 - a. The moderator shall convene meetings of the Administrative Commission, lead the meetings of the Commission, serve as the primary contact for persons who wish to communicate with the commission, and ensure the Commission’s support of the Atlanta church.
 - b. The clerk shall keep the minutes of the Commission and a record of the Commission’s activities. The clerk shall complete all correspondence, as directed by the Commission; and report to the Commission any correspondence received.
2. The Administrative Commission, acting as the session, shall elect a treasurer to properly manage the finances of Atlanta Presbyterian Church (G-3.0205).
3. The Administrative Commission shall approve the minutes prepared by the clerk of the Commission. These minutes shall be considered minutes of the session, and they shall be included in the official minutes (G-3.0204).
4. The Administrative Commission, through the clerk of the Commission, shall provide to the stated meeting of the presbytery (for inclusion in the presbytery minutes) written updates of the Administrative Commission’s work. A final report that summarizes the minutes of the Commission and provides final recommendations shall be presented to and approved by the Presbytery of Geneva before the Commission is dismissed.
5. The presbytery stated clerk shall serve as the primary staff resource to the Administrative Commission.
6. The responsibilities and duties listed below will follow on the decision of the Administrative Commission (serving as the session) to recommend sale of the building and dissolution of the congregation.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

I. ARRANGE FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF CHURCH MEMBERS

1. Work as the session to identify where members wish to transfer their membership, and when the transfer is to be completed.
2. Provide pastoral support and care to the Atlanta church during this time of transition.
3. Prior to dissolution, the clerk of the Commission (acting as clerk of session) will effect transfers of membership, as requested by members.
4. Provide to the Presbytery's Stated Clerk the names and contact information of members who have not transferred their membership prior to dissolution of the church. The stated clerk will effect transfers requested after dissolution.

II. ASCERTAIN THE FINANCIAL STATUS AND OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE SESSION

The Administrative Commission will discern a plan for the management of all financial obligations and assets.

1. Conduct a financial review of the Treasurer's books for the last 12 months.
2. Determine location of checking accounts, savings accounts, endowment accounts, Sunday School accounts, Women's group accounts and any other financial resources.
3. On endowment or memorial accounts, determine if there are any bequest stipulations.
4. Have all accounts closed, transferring any balances to the primary checking account of the church (to meet any outstanding obligations) or to the presbytery.
5. If any church accounts remain open, submit new signature card(s) for accounts with at least two officers of the presbytery designated as signatories (suggested: the treasurer and a member of the Committee on Operations).
6. Determine any outstanding debts/obligations.
7. Publish in local paper a public notice to the effect: The Atlanta Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, NY, will end its ministry on or about (date). Any outstanding debts/financial obligations must be submitted in writing to the church treasurer at (address) by the close of the business day (date) .
8. Authorize the payment of all financial obligations.
9. Provide a "statement of contribution" to all current year contributors.
10. If the church owns any stocks, bonds, certificates, or other financial instruments have ownership of such transferred to the Presbytery of Geneva if necessary.
11. Secure an appraisal of the church property, in preparation for possible sale or other transfer of the property.
12. The Administrative Commission shall include a report of the total assets of the church in their minutes, including the value of the land & building, total operating funds (savings and/or checking accounts), and any investments or endowment funds. If the property is to be transferred or sold, the Administrative Commission shall include this financial report in their final report to the presbytery.
13. Following the dissolution, transfer all remaining account balances to the Presbytery of Geneva and close any remaining church accounts.

III. SECURE THE SESSION RECORDS

1. Locate all Session minutes, the church register, and other financial and legal records to be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for appropriate disposition.
2. The Clerk of Session (Commission) will (if possible to do so in person) hand these symbolically to a representative of the Stated Clerk at the conclusion of the Presbytery's recognition of the ministry of the church.

IV. DETERMINE WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH THE PROPERTY

The Administrative Commission will discern a plan for the future ownership of the property.

If the Presbytery is to take ownership of the property (as is the right of the Presbytery, per the *Book of Order* G-4.02), the following steps shall be taken:

1. Secure a Clear Title to the property.

2. Provide a copy of the deed to the Presbytery Board of Trustees (Operations Committee). A copy of the deed may be obtained from the County Courthouse. Ascertain if there are any deed restrictions or stipulations.
3. Transfer title of the property to the Presbytery of Geneva.
4. List the property on the Presbytery's property and liability insurance coverage, terminate any other current insurance coverage.
5. Notify the County Assessor's Office that the property is no longer used as a church as of the dissolution date.
6. Discover if the congregation is incorporated; if so:
 - a. Locate the Articles of Incorporation.
 - b. Publish a public Notice to Dissolve a Corporation in the local newspaper.
 - c. Adopt and publish the following motion: "Pursuant to G-4.0203) of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbytery of Geneva is the legal successor of the Atlanta Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, NY.

V. SECURE THE BUILDING AND PROPERTY

The Administrative Commission (acting as the session) has a responsibility and right to *advise* as to the distribution of the proceeds of the sale of the building, *with the following parameters*:

- If the sale precedes the dissolution, the Administrative Commission will guide the process of appropriately following that advice. *The Presbytery of Geneva will have the opportunity to concur with the Administrative Commission's advice regarding distribution, with the final approval of the distribution of funds being the responsibility of the Committee on Operations (Trustees of the Presbytery of Geneva).*
- If the sale follows the dissolution, the Presbytery of Geneva will determine the distribution of the proceeds of the sale of the property. The Administrative Commission will communicate the session's desires and recommendations.

1. Arrange for the disposition of furnishings. The Administrative Commission (acting as the Session) may arrange for the disposition of furnishings, communion ware, hymnals, Sunday School supplies, pulpit, lectern, and communion table, etc. These may be given away, sold by the piece, or bids may be received for the entire lot of furnishing. The Administrative Commission shall be consulted and concur with the decision to dispose of any item thought to be of historic value. It is recommended that at least one appraisal by an antiques dealer/estate assessor be obtained before accepting any bids.
2. These decisions should be documented in detail in both Session and Commission minutes.
3. Ascertain which utilities should remain connected and which may be disconnected and make these arrangements with the proper companies. Transfer the billing for the utilities to the Presbytery of Geneva effective on the dissolution date. It may be necessary to maintain heat during the winter to avoid damage. Electricity and water should remain on.
4. Arrangements should be made to drain the water pipes if the utilities can be turned off.
5. Secure the building and recover keys from anyone who does not need access.
6. If distribution of keys is widespread and any contents are valuable, consider having the locks changed.
7. Make provisions through the Operations Committee for a caretaker until the final disposition of the property.
8. After the closing worship service remove any identifying signage and the cornerstone, if possible (checking for a time capsule).

VI. PLAN A FINAL WORSHIP SERVICE CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE CONGREGATION (in partnership with the congregation)

1. Set the date and time for the service.
2. Allow time for the date to be publicized and the invitations issued.
3. Decide what special features the service should include.
4. Determine whether the service will include the Service of the Lord's Supper.
5. Consider structuring the service using the resources from the Book of Occasional Services which has a service on "Vacating of a Church Building," including the dissolution of a church.
6. Identify a possible preacher and other participants.

7. Former pastors / preachers may be invited.
8. At least one representative from the church should be included.
9. At least one representative from the Administrative Commission should be included.
10. The Stated Clerk and the Presbytery Leader should be included.
11. Identify favorite hymns of church members (and identify favorite hymns of the congregation as a whole).
12. Consider possibilities for special music.
13. Have the session determine where the proceeds from the offering will go.
14. Arrange for ushers, parking attendants (if needed), and elders to serve Communion (if that is part of the service).
15. Format, type, and print bulletins.
16. Arrange for preparation of communion elements.
17. Arrange for any needed cleaning of the facility before and after the service.
18. Arrange for a reception following the service (location / how food will be provided / financial resources of the congregation to pay for a reception).
19. Appoint a group to take charge of decorating and other arrangements.
20. Gather memorabilia to display.

VII. PUBLICIZE THE SERVICE ENDING THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

1. Have church members make a "guest list" (with contact information) of relatives, friends, former members, etc. whom they wish to invite to the service.
2. Have invitations printed and facilitate sending them (sent by a person or group / sent by church members . . . with the stamps provided from church funds).
3. Design a flier or write a letter to be distributed to the churches and members of the presbytery. Send flier or letter to the presbytery office, with ample time for duplication and distribution.
4. Prepare a press release for local newspapers.
5. Arrange for local newspaper coverage and a photographer.

VIII. DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMISSION

- The Administrative Commission for Atlanta Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, NY is dissolved upon the completion of its work and its final written report to the Presbytery of Geneva and the members of the congregation.

BENEDICTION AND ADJOURNMENT

The Presbytery VOTED to **adjourn** the meeting with prayer.

The Moderator offered prayer and pronounced the meeting to be adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Attest: Amy Loving Austin, Stated Clerk