THE 45TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY of THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Nota Bene: This document is my own, and is not a product of my Session, Presbytery, or any General Assembly Committee/Commission I may serve on. Nothing in these comments should be taken as addressing any pending or impending matter before the Permanent Judicial Commission. Nevertheless, the content is informed by my role as a presbyter in each court of the church. Many of these recommendations are administrative and straightforward but are still listed for a complete enumeration. For others, the intent, points of potential debate, and my disposition (when appropriate) are related to the matter in its current form as published in the Commissioners Handbook. It is possible that any one item could be amended either by a Standing Committee of Commissioners or the floor of the Assembly in such a way as to convince me to change my mind – which would be a mark of a healthy deliberative Assembly – for which I hope you will join me in prayer.

#	Subject	Description / Points of Debate / Preliminary Disposition	Mover	Referred
45-01	Election of Moderator	Elect TE Dave Strunk as Moderator. TE Strunk has been diligently preparing for this role for an entire year with a marked humility that will serve him, and our Assembly, very well.	Nominating Committee	Floor
45-02	Election of Moderator-Elect	Elect RE Jack Cathey as Moderator-Elect. The 46 th GA is teed up to need a steady hand at the Chair.	Nominating Committee	Floor
45-03	Committee Nominations	Elect the slate of nominees for permanent committees, standing committees, and boards. I think there should be openings for floor nominees in every instance. It may not be as streamlined in advance, but it allows for the Assembly to have a greater impact on these important positions. The <i>Rules for Assembly</i> would need to be amended to have a new procedure for this.	Nominating Committee	Floor
45-04	Committee Nominations	Approve the 2025-2026 Chairman for the BRI Board of Directors, the slate of nominees to fill vacancies of the Permanent Nominating Committee, the chair of Nominating Committee, and the Chaplain Endorser.	44 th Moderator	Floor

45-05	46 th GA	Cherry Creek EPC (Englewood, CO) invites the 45 th GA to host the 46 th GA TE Strait's team did a marvelous job hosting the 39 th General Assembly.	Session of Cherry Creek EPC	Floor
45-06	O 44-A	Ratify an amendment to G.10-7 and G.9.5C.3 regarding policies and explanations for Transitional Pastors. Points of Debate: • This overwhelmingly passed the Presbyteries – but a larger question is – for those who say the BoG isn't for 'policy-making' – that is exactly what is proposed here. There needs to be a clear explanation about the relationship between: The Constitution as 'policy stated' and the Acts of Assembly as 'policy enumerated/expanded into procedure.' If the Constitution isn't a procedural manual, then what is it? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE	Stated Clerk	Floor
45-07	Articles of Agreement	Approve the revised Articles of Agreement with the St. Andrew's Presbytery of Argentina through 2030. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE. I'm happy to take the committee recommendation.	Fraternal Relations	FR SC
45-08	Fraternal Relationship	Approve a formal Fraternal relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE. I'm happy to take the committee recommendation.	Fraternal Relations	FR SC
45-09	Fraternal & Confessional Relations	Approve the affirmation of fraternal and confessional relations between the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the EPC (USA) upon which a more detailed Memorandum of Understanding will be developed. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE. I'm happy to take the committee recommendation.	Fraternal Relations	FR SC
45-10	Ordination Process	 Amend G.11-2. This is the procedural overhaul promised by the AiC. It's more of a renovation work than a destruction and rebuild. Most of the clarity promised comes from these amendments to this section of G.11. Points of Debate: Is the Endorsement process described in G.11-2.A in conflict with the proposed language in 45-12, the AiC's proposed changes to G.18-3.E? Is it clear that 'Applicant' refers to the person who desires to be a Candidate, but has not yet been received by the Presbytery as such? 	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor

		 The Presbytery of the Midwest's overture (recommendation 45-40) may receive some engagement at this point. See my notes on 45-40. The proposed changes to G.11-2.D are most relevant to that matter. Why is it wise that the Candidate's pastor is 'ordinarily not' the Advisor, and why is that a proposed deletion to G.11-2.E? Should the EPC keep the "extraordinary clause" (present G.11-2.I) the famous 'nuclear button?' No, we should not. If the AiC only accomplishes one thing, it should be this, and it would be enough. It would be a blessing to purge the BoG of this often-confused distinction that has no functional difference - saecula saeculorum. Amen. Disclaimer: I serve on this Ad Interim Committee - and while I will vote my conscience as an individual commissioner, I cannot, in good conscience, contradict or otherwise attempt to further perfect, in my own preliminary judgment, the recommendations of the committee. 		
45-11	PJC Analysis	Recommend the approval of 45-10 since it meets the 3C Analysis according to the PJC.	PJC	Floor
45-12	Session's Endorsement Authority	 Amend G.18-3 by approving a new section titled G.18-3.E defining Session's authority in the Session Endorsement process. Points of Debate: It was pointed out by my friend, Andrew Winter, that the language in the proposed revision to G.18-3.E.3 "submitting a request" may conflict with the proposal for G.11-2 in 45-10. That may be the case. But so long as it is understood that the Applicant submits a request, and the "submission of request" that the Session provides is essentially, the Endorsement Form, then there should be no apparent controversy. The Floor might assist here. Some have asked: does this bind the Session's to a responsibility in circumstances where there are no members seeking ordination? Is it clear that the Session retains immediate jurisdiction over the Applicant and Candidate? As an aside, this would not make G.18-3 the longest sub-section since G.24-3 goes all the way to W! (See disclosure from 44-10) 	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor

45-13	PJC Analysis	Recommend the approval of 45-12 since it meets the 3C Analysis according to the PJC.	PJC	Floor
45-14	Presbyteries Responsibilities with Respect to Teaching Elders	Amend G.19.4.B – with respect to Teaching Elders of the Presbytery - clarifying the previous language of 'Minister' and clarifying the varied roles coming out of the G.11-2 revisions in 44-10. This is largely for procedural and terminological clarity coming out of 44-10. If the substance of 44-10 passes, this should as well. (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-15	PJC Analysis	Recommend the approval of 45-14 since it meets the 3C Analysis according to the PJC.	РЈС	Floor
45-16	Responsibilities of Ministerial Committees	Amend G.21-2.D.1 – with respect to the Ministerial Committee - clarifying the previous language of 'Minister' and clarifying the varied roles coming out of the G.11-2 revisions in 44-10. This is largely for procedural and terminological clarity coming out of 44-10. If the substance of 44-10 passes, this should as well. (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-17	PJC Analysis	Recommend the approval of 45-16 since it meets the 3C Analysis according to the PJC.	РЈС	Floor
45-18	Responsibilities of the Ministerial Vocation Committee	 Amend Rules for Assembly X § 1.C "Committee on Ministerial Vocation" to include two additional points of description/responsibility including interviewing CEEP candidates (#5) which they already do, and exercising authority over all forms in the ordination process (#7). Points of Debate: Does this grant ipso facto commission authority to the MVC? I am confident this is not the intent, but it needs to be clarified in the language as proposed. All GA Committees have descriptions in the Rules for Assembly. The MVC has one of the more limited definitions and enumerated responsibilities, however they are undoubtfully one of the most active and hard-working groups. Still, when I chaired the Permanent Committee on Theology I warned against 'theological activism' and a similar warning should exist for the MVC – they should do what the GA asks them to do, but only what the GA asks them to do. Should this recommendation have come from the MVC, rather than the AiC? 	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor

		(See disclosure from 44-10).		
45-19	National Written Examination Oversight	Amend Acts of Assembly 82-07 to clarify that the MVC has oversight over the national written examinations and the amend Acts of Assembly 82-07 regarding the elimination of the extraordinary clause. This is a companion recommendation to 45-10. Points of Debate: • Should the Acts of Assembly be amended, or merely updated and previous Acts superseded? • Should 45-19 be divided into two questions? (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-20	Elimination of Bachelors Degree	 New Act of the Assembly superseding Act of Assembly 12-12 that would remove the requirement of "Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university" for ordination. Points of Debate: Doesn't this strike to the standards portion of the process when so far, the AiC reports touching only on process? Should the CEEP process be understood to be an equivalency for Masters level education only? Or should it cover Bachelors? Disposition: REFER back to the AiC (assuming that 45-26 passes; see disclosure from 44-10). 	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-21	Criminal Background Checks for all Candidates prior to Endorsement	To require all candidates to undergo a criminal background check with a three-year expiration date to be submitted by the Session prior to endorsing and individual for Candidacy. If approved this would be an Act of Assembly. Points of Debate: Should this be in the Book of Government? Should this be required at this phase in the ordination process? Will the Session be responsible for the cost? Will the type of background check be specified? State? Federal? Etc. Will the Session have to submit the executive summary of the check with the Endorsement Form in order to be properly filed? Does that material then belong to the Presbytery? Should the "candidates" in the recommendation read "Applicants" if 44-10 passes?	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor

45-22	Criminal Background Check by the OGA prior to Ordination	To require all candidates to undergo a standardized National Background Check conducted through the Office of the General Assembly and paid for by the Candidate's Presbytery prior to being approved for ordination. If approved this would be an Act of Assembly. Points of Debate: • Should this be in the Book of Government? • An OGA processed background check would standardize the process more effectively, but is it cross-jurisdictional to involve the General Assembly? Is there anything in the BoG that would enumerate the responsibility to supply human resources to Presbyteries – is that what in view in G.20-4.A.2? • Would this be required prior to ordination, or prior to examination for ordination? Would it be a required element to release the written examinations? • Is this best left to the regional court? (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-23	Require "Application" and "Questionnaire" Forms	To require individuals seeking to be taken under care as Candidates submit the forms "Application for Candidacy" and "Preliminary Questionnaire" available on the EPC website. If approved this would be an Act of Assembly. Points of Debate: • If 45-18 passes, the MVC will have the authority to amend these forms – will that include General Assembly review and approval? • Previously, the Questionnaire involved parts 1 and 2 – with an emphasis now moving away from prospective candidates putting theological concepts in their own words and learning to own the terminology of the Westminster Standards. This is very positive in my judgment. (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-24	Require Physical Exam and Psychological Exam	To require all candidates under care to have a current physical exam, and a psychological exam (which includes the most current version of the MMPI) including a personal assessment with the psychologist administering the exam. If approved this would be an Act of Assembly. Points of Debate: • Should this be in the Book of Government? • Who will be responsible for the cost of such a required provision? • Will the release of written examinations be contingent on this provision? • Do the Acts of Assembly have the binding force of the General Assemblies authority of order since it is in, but not of, the Constitution? How will that be interpreted? • Is this best left to the regional court?	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor

		(See disclosure from 44-10)		
45-25	Submitting PIF to OGA	To require all candidates, prior to final examination by the Presbytery, to submit a completed and current PIF. Points of Debate: • Does the OGA serve as a documentary repository? Should they? • Do nationally filed PIF's allow for Presbyteries to validate candidates from other Presbyteries or assist Search Committees in their process? (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-26	Third Year for the AiC on Ordination Standards	To approve a third year for this committee to review and recommend any changes to our ordination standards. Points of Debate: • Has the AiC demonstrated sufficient competence to warrant entrusting them with this addition year of work related to standards? • Is one year sufficient for work related to standards when the process work took two years? • Does the AiC's current membership have the capacity for the additional work since membership has decreased? • How does 45-20 relate to the work on standards v. process? (See disclosure from 44-10)	AiC Ordination Standards	Floor
45-27	Position Paper on Divorce & Remarriage	To review the current position paper on Divorce and Remarriage. Points of Debate: Is the current paper unable to address pressing cultural issues? Midwest provides eight questions that might be addressed in a revised document. I hope that if the review does take place that the Permanent Committee on Theology would do so rather than an Ad-Interim Committee. Does Theology need two years to do this? Disposition: NEUTRAL At present, this is the only business before the Theology Standing Committee, which historically, loves to 'do stuff.' I'll wait and see what comes out of that time.	Presbytery of the Midwest	T SC

45-28	Retired Ministers Housing Allowance	To allow ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403(b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations, adopted pursuant to the internal revenue code.	BRI	Floor
45-29	Amend Rules VII §7-3 and §7-4	To approve the Rivers and Lakes overture recommendation 45-30 as edited. Context: When the PJC was reviewing 45-30, they viewed the matter favorably but believed that it raised additional matters needing attention. When the PJC worked on this, they assumed the adoption of 45-30 (with minor edits) and expanded upon it as if it had already passed. The addition of edits to §7-4 were procedurally necessary. Points of Debate: Does the definition of an "overture" need clarity? Should the OGA be required to publish properly filed overtures in advance of the Commissioners Handbook? If there should be a publishing deadline, is "ordinarily five days" appropriate? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE I worked on the PJC team to present these proposed amendments to the larger commission, which recommended them unanimously.	PJC	O&R SC
45-30	Amend Rules VII §7-3	To clarify the definition of an "overture" and include a publishing deadline for properly filed overtures. Points of Debate: • Does the definition of an "overture" need clarity? • Should the OGA be required to publish properly filed overtures in advance of the Commissioners Handbook? • If there should be a publishing deadline, is "ordinarily five days" appropriate? Disposition: ANSWER WITH REFERENCE to 45-29. • My Session originally authored the language which RLP approved. The PJC expansions are welcome and helpful.	Presbytery of the Rivers & Lakes	O&R SC
45-31	Amend Rules VII by adding §7-5	To approve the Rivers and Lakes overture recommendation 45-32 as edited. Context: When the PJC was reviewing 45-32, they viewed the matter favorably but believed that it raised additional matters needing attention. When the PJC worked on this, they assumed the adoption of 45-32 (with procedural edits) and expanded upon it as if it had already passed. Points of Debate:	PJC	O&R SC

		 Should an overture be able to come to the Assembly which has not previously been presented to a Presbytery? Would that even be properly an overture according to <i>Rules</i> §7-3? Does the 2/3 vote of the Assembly to take up a previously defeated overture assume the total enrollment, as in the case of amending the <i>Rules</i> (XV§15-1), or is it 2/3 vote of present commissioners? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE I worked on the PJC team to present these proposed amendments to the larger commission, which recommended them unanimously. 		
45-32	Amend Rules VII by adding § 7-5	 To allow a pathway for previously defeated overtures to appeal to the General Assembly. Points of Debate: Should a defeated overture at a regional court have the opportunity to be heard by the Assembly? Should a Session of Elder be allowed to amend the previously defeated overture, or should it be the same as presented, as the original overture from RLP indicates? Disposition: ANSWER WITH REFERENCE to 45-31. My Session originally authored the language which RLP approved. The PJC expansions are procedurally necessary and clarifying. 	Presbytery of the Rivers & Lakes	O&R SC
45-33	Amend Rules XIII §13	 Distinguishing overtures from new business at the Assembly, and the procedures for new business. Points of Debate: Should business not presented to a Presbytery, but requested at the Assembly, require an explanation as to why? Will this allow for a more explicitly deliberative method for handling new business? Does the 2/3 threshold for consideration of new business protect against the Assembly being hijacked by commissioners' resolutions? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE I worked on the PJC team to present these proposed amendments to the larger commission, which recommended them unanimously. 	PJC	O&R SC
45-34	Communication to the PC(USA)	Intent: Direct the SC and/or NLT to communicate with the PC(USA) requesting release of foreign mission endowments and bequests to Presbyterian mission agencies actually engaged in foreign mission. Points of Debate: None of the 'whereas' arguments concern the EPC directly. NRP speaks of "endowments and bequests" but does not specify.	Presbytery of the New River	WO SC

		NRP does not have specific "Presbyterian mission agencies" listed.		
		Disposition: REFER to World Outreach Permanent Committee		
		The intent of this overture is faithful, but it may lack clarity to be actionable by the Stated Clerk and/or NLT.		
		 Although the matter may be time sensitive, referring it to the WO PC will allow for more clarity. 		
		• I look forward to hearing the debate on this matter which is <i>prima facia</i> uncontroversial and likely to be met with wide agreement, but when drilling down into the details becomes more complicated.		
		To direct the OGA to make digitizing the minutes of the 1 st – 26 th Assemblies a priority in 2025/2026.		
45-35	Digitize 1 st -26 th Assemblies	Points of Debate: • What are the budgetary implications here? • Would OGA staff do this work, or should it be contracted by a professional archivist?	Presbytery Review Committee	Admin SC
		Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE. This is a wonderful idea.		
45-36	Investigating Electronic Voting	To direct the NLT to investigate and report on the potential use of in-person electronic voting devices for use at the annual General Assembly meeting. Points of Debate: Not the merits, but the request. • Does the NLT have a committee to do this work already? • What "culture/ethos" aspects of our voting system would be at risk if we pursued this study? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE • My Session originally authored the language which RLP approved. • The fourth whereas has substantial information RRoO 12 th ed) regarding updated procedures/considerations for this form of voting. • The fifth whereas is especially relevant – please read it. • The sixth whereas – in my biased opinion – is ecclesiastical poetry.	Presbytery of the Rivers & Lakes	Admin SC
45-37	FY26 Budget	To approve the FY26 Administrative Budget Points of Debate: • For those with fiscal concerns, this is your opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification on how the financials of the EPC operate. • Why does the 'Software Subscriptions' increase 48%? Are we starting to budget for Learning Management Software?	NLT	Admin SC

		 Why is Revelation 7:9 designated as a commission? They have previously been named a "Task Force" and a "Team." Why are they funded both here and in Special Projects? For what is this money used for? This group has reported but has not had any recommendations for the past two years. Where is the AiC - SSA? The group met twice in-person since the last Assembly. 6/5/25 Note: ASC Michael Davis told me that the AiC's on SSA and Standards were mistakenly conflated into one budget line item. Disposition: NEUTRAL - pending answers to these and other questions. 		
45-38	FY26 Special Projects	 To approve the FY26 Special Projects Budget Points of Debate: Why is Revelation 7:9 designated as a commission? They have previously been named a "Task Force" and a "Team." Why do they receive additional funding from Special Projects (\$25k) in addition to the \$15k they receive from the Administrative Budget? For what is this money used for? This group has reported but has not had any recommendations for the past two years. Why are Church Planting Initiatives not line itemed? Disposition: NEUTRAL - pending answers to these and other questions. 	NLT	Admin SC
45-39	Answer 45-40	To answer 45-40 with reference to 45-10. Points of Debate: • Does the PJC move beyond 3C analysis into the merits of 45-40? Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE. This would have the effect of answering 45-40 in the negative.	PJC	MV SC
45-40	Amend G.11-2.E to allow for RE Advisors	 BoG presently mandates that only TE's may serve as Advisors to candidates in the ordination process. With a limited bench of available Advisors this hopes to give Presbyteries flexibility in approving competent RE's to serve in the same advisory capacity. This overture envisions two key roles: the Candidate's pastor, who oversees discipleship and formation, and the Advisor, who is a an RE "who serves on the MC." Points of Debate: This assumes that this envisioned RE Advisor would already be serving on the MC to have the sufficient experience to effectively advise. Are Ruling Elders capable to advise a process that they have not been through? The EPC is a three-office church, not two. (See PJC Rationale) 	Presbytery of the Midwest	MV SC

		Disposition: NEGATIVE • The PJC recommends in 45-39 answering this with reference to 45-10 which addresses this same matter in a more comprehensive way. This would have the effect of answering MWP's overture in the negative.		
		Amend Act of Assembly 12-11. The PRC reports that many Presbyteries do not follow the current provisions. Ostensibly, this would mean that if this passes, the PRC would have to cite them less often for repeated exceptions of form. Points of Debate:		MV SC
45-41	Recording Terms of Call	• Should Acts of Assembly ever be amended? Or should a new action be carried that supersedes a previous one? In the latter, it would seem that one Assembly would merely update the actions of another, which they have right to do, and the Acts of Assembly serves as the digest of previous actions.	Presbytery Review Committee	MV SC
		 Disposition: NEGATIVE I am generally opposed to the idea of amending the Acts of Assembly. Any new language will include undiscovered ambiguities that might well have unintended consequences. Since this is not clearly necessary, the old language is to be preferred. If there were merely a recommendation of the PRC to carry this action, and supersede Acts 12-11, I would have less concern. 		
45-42	Exceptions Requiring Response	Approve the noted exceptions of form or substance from 12 Presbyteries concerning exceptions from minutes requiring responses. For what it's worth, I think the guidelines for the PRC and the engagement from the Floor, is a matter deserving increased attention.	Presbytery Review Committee	Floor
45-43	Responses from Presbyteries	Approve the notations from Presbyteries cited by the 44 th General Assembly as satisfactorily responding to exceptions of form or substance.	Presbytery Review Committee	Floor
45-44	Sustain PJC Rulings	To sustain all matters pertaining to the resolution of complaints (D.14) with respect to Session of Beverly Heights Church, et al v. The Presbytery of the Alleghenies (Case I-VII). **NB*: This is one en grosse motion encompassing twelve orders across seven distinct D.14 cases. The Assembly is required to sustain or not sustain the preliminary judgment of the PJC (G. 21-3.D3.b). The merits are not debatable, but questions for clarification are appropriate. Should the Assembly not sustain, they will subsequently have to decide if the case(s) should be remanded to the PJC, or a new commission formed for the purpose of adjudicating the remanded case. However, since these cases pertain to a particular church no longer under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of the	РЈС	Floor

		Alleghenies and the EPC, and since there was no complaint or appeal of the decision of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies to dismiss that particular church, and since the Presbytery Review Committee has not reported a potential exception of substance in the matter it seems highly unlikely that the Assembly should not sustain all matters in this instance. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE		
45-45	Cooperative Agency	Approve Crossworld as a Cooperative Agency According to the EPC Endorsement Policy , the World Outreach committee is acting in accord with its purpose. The attainment of visas for religious work is increasingly difficult. Partnership with this group will allow for the placement of Global Workers with legitimate professional jobs that necessitate government visas. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE	World Outreach Committee	WO SC
45-46	Withdrawal Fraternal Relations	Withdrawal fraternal relationship with The Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar since it is not fulfilling the criteria established in Acts of Assembly 12-10. Disposition: AFFIRMATIVE	Fraternal Relations Committee	FR SC
45-47	44 th Assembly Minutes	Approve the minutes of the 44 th General Assembly.	National Leadership Team	Admin SC
45-48	Omnibus	Consent motion for routine matters. The Omnibus: where a hundred decisions ride in one carriage – just make sure you know who's driving.		

Admin SC: Administration Standing Committee (National Leadership)

FR SC: Fraternal Relations Standing Committee

MVC SC: Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee

O&R SC: Overtures & Resolutions Standing Committee

PJC: Permanent Judicial Commission

T SC: Theology Standing Committee

WO SC: World Outreach Standing Committee