

**A Covenant Between
The Synod of the Sun
and
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
2014**

I. THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT

Any covenant made within the church is to reflect God's covenant of grace in Jesus Christ. That covenant, through which the church was created, gives content and direction to any other relationship which the church names as covenantal. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the Synod of the Sun covenant to express and forward the work of the church of Jesus Christ.

Austin Seminary exists to serve the church in relationship with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and the Synod of the Sun. The relationship to the General Assembly is through the Committee on Theological Education. The relationship with the Synod is through this covenant and our shared mission to be a provisional witness to the reign of God.

II. PARTIES TO THE COVENANT

A. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary is a non-profit corporation incorporated by the State of Texas. The Restated Articles of Incorporation were approved by the Board of Trustees on November 12, 1987 and revised in 1996 and by the General Assembly in 1988.

B. Synod of the Sun

The Synod of the Sun is a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as defined in the Book of Order G-3.04 and is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas. As a council of the church, the Synod is committed to and expresses the functions of the church as stated in G-3.0101

C. Mission Statement of Each Party

1. Austin Seminary (adopted 1982)

For the glory of God and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary is a seminary in the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition whose mission is to educate and equip individuals for the ordained Christian ministry and other forms of Christian service and leadership; to employ its resources in the service of the church; to promote and engage in critical theological thought and research; and to be a winsome and exemplary community of God's people.

2. Synod of the Sun (adopted 2013)

The Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) serves Christ by connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the Synod's bounds.

III.COMMITMENTS OF THE COVENANT

A. Commitment of the Seminary to the Synod

1. The primary commitment of the Seminary to the Synod is to prepare persons for the ordained Ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition and to provide additional education for ordained teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders.. This commitment is expressed by the faculty providing students with the education and skills needed for ministry. Every other activity of the Seminary is supplementary of this primary program, and the Seminary will consider other tasks in light of this central service to the church.
2. Austin Seminary will provide theological leadership for the church. The faculty will continue to bring the highest standards of academic excellence to bear on the needs of the church. The results of their experience and scholarship will be shared with the church through teaching, preaching, and publications.
3. The Seminary will continue as a theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), enriched and challenged by the variety of ministries in the church universal and by the theological diversity within our Presbyterian heritage. The Seminary claims as God's gifts both the particular emphases of the Reformed tradition and the perspectives of the church catholic.
4. The Seminary will continue to claim the diversity of this region, the American Southwest, and beyond as one of God's gifts and challenges to the Church. Accordingly, the Seminary will seek an increased involvement of racial-ethnic people and perspectives in its faculty, staff, administration, students, and programming.
5. The Seminary will provide credit and non-credit programs to enhance the effectiveness of ordained Christian ministers and other leaders of the church, where possible in cooperation with the Synod, and in such areas as the church's ministry in higher education.
6. The Seminary will inform the Synod of its programs, plans, needs, and activities.
7. The Seminary will encourage various bodies of Synod and other church groups to meet on campus.
8. The Seminary will welcome a Synod representative as liaison to the Board of Trustees.

B. Commitments of the Synod to the Seminary

The primary commitment of the Synod to the Seminary is to cooperate with the Seminary in its mission to educate and equip individuals for ordained Christian ministry and for other forms of Christian service and leadership. To that end, the Synod makes the following commitments:

1. As partner with the Seminary in this mission of education, the Synod will encourage and aid the Seminary to interpret its mission, its program, and its needs to Presbyterians across the Synod.

2. The Synod will encourage its presbyteries and congregations to support the Theological Education Fund (1% Plan). In addition, the Synod will honor the history of partnership with the Seminary by continuing to include a stated amount for Austin Seminary in its annual budget as a symbol of this covenant relationship. The Synod encourages the Seminary to solicit financial and other support from individuals, Presbyterian governing bodies, and other sources.
3. The Synod will encourage sound educational planning by the Seminary which recognizes its unique location and role in this region, which maintains continuity with the values and emphases of the historic Reformed tradition, and which affirms the Presbyterian emphasis on the highest quality of theological education and training.
4. The Synod will encourage presbyteries to provide care for their ministerial candidates and those preparing for church occupations at the Seminary, to urge their candidates to study at the Seminary, and to help in the placement of the Seminary's graduates.
5. The Synod will aid the Seminary in promoting the awareness that theological education is an intrinsic part of the whole church and that trained leadership is crucial for the church's faithfulness.
6. The Synod will work with the Seminary to inform presbyteries and congregations of special needs and opportunities in theological education as these affect the mission of both Synod and Seminary.
7. The Synod will help to provide access to other governing bodies and will work to stimulate communication between the Seminary and Synod's constituent presbyteries.
8. The Synod will consult with the Seminary in determining the need and in making provision for educational programs designed to strengthen ministry among racial-ethnic peoples and other special program groups.
9. The Synod will cooperate with the Seminary in supporting and implementing theological educational events provided for ministers and ordained and non-ordained leaders at the local church, presbytery, and Synod levels.
10. The Synod will look to the resources of the Seminary for assistance in evaluating and responding to various currents in the life of the church universal in light of Reformed and Presbyterian theology.

C. Mutual commitments of the Synod and the Seminary:

1. The Synod and the Seminary will seek to interpret to communicants within the Synod the unique place of the Seminary in the Synod's mission and that of the greater Church.
2. The Synod and the Seminary will support each other through prayers and encouragement of their work and mission.

3. The Synod and Seminary will work together to develop educational events for pastors and ordained and non-ordained leaders and to provide opportunities for the constituency to be in dialogue about the mission of the church.
4. The Seminary will consult with the Synod before embarking on a major capital funds campaign when such a campaign would enlist support from all congregations in the Synod. The Synod encourages the Seminary to approach individuals for gifts, trusts, wills, and bequests.
5. The Synod and the Seminary are committed to continue and strengthen the relationship of the Seminary and the presbyteries of the Synod through such vehicles as might be deemed appropriate.

IV FORMAL APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

- A. This Covenant shall be effective upon the approval of the APTS Board of Trustees and the Synod Assembly and shall remain in effect until amended by both parties or rescinded by either party.
- B. Hereafter this Covenant will be reviewed every five years. The Synod, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will set the schedule for this review. The review will be done by Synod’s Covenant Review Team and the Covenant Review Team named by the Seminary, and they will recommend possible changes or amendments. Amendment procedures can be initiated by the officers of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary and/or the Synod if there are anticipated major decisions by the Seminary or the Synod which could change the nature of the covenant relationship.
- C. The Synod and the Seminary shall seek appropriate ways to give recognition to this Covenant.

For the Synod of the Sun	Date
Per action of the Synod 11/1/2014	

For Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Date
Per action of the Board of Trustees 5/24/2014	