

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann become PCUSA comoderators

The "bold, unapologetic women" will share the second most important position in the 1.4 million-member denomination for two years.

[Christian Century staff](#) from reporting by General Assembly News in the [July 18, 2018](#) issue



Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri (left) and Cindy Kohlmann (right). Photo by Michael Whitman/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann were elected as comoderators for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at its meeting June 16–23 in St. Louis.

It took commissioners four rounds of voting to choose them over other options, including one other pair of comoderators. On the final vote, Cintrón-Olivieri and Kohlmann received 266 votes to 253 for the other comoderator pair. They were immediately installed.

Cintrón-Olivieri, who grew up in Puerto Rico, is an ESL teacher and ruling elder at First Spanish Presbyterian Church in Miami. Kohlmann serves as resource presbyter for the presbyteries of Boston and Northern New England.

Before the election, Cintrón-Olivieri promised that their work over the next two years will be marked by “audacious, spirited, bold, unapologetic women.”

Both believe that placing more emphasis on people and less on buildings will aid congregations.

“Sometimes we get tied to our buildings,” Cintrón-Olivieri said. “Maybe we need to see what is happening in the community to rethink the structures we have.”

Kohlmann, who designs leadership training opportunities and connects leaders with local and denominational resources, has helped start sometimes difficult conversations about structure and vision in the midst of change.

“If the church building wasn’t there, there would not be a place for community to be together,” Kohlmann said. “It’s not about leaving the building behind. It’s about not making the building the first thing we talk about in annual reports. It’s what we use to do the mission of Christ.”

A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title “People: Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann.”