



***WORSHIP AND WORK
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL***



223rd General Assembly---Day 1

*"But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness."
Matthew 6:33*

UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS

As people flowed into the convention hall, sounds of the St. Louis Symphony Brass welcomed them into this space to begin with worship. Whenever the people of God gather together, it is always appropriate that we begin with worship of the Lord who has called us by grace together into new life for the sake of the kingdom and the world. So, as this 223rd General Assembly opened officially, commissioners, staff, observers and visitors, alike offered worship through inspiring music from a collective choir of local Presbyterians, visual images emphasizing our baptism and deliverance through the waters, proclamation co-preached (by the co-moderators) and the nourishment of the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper. "Renewing the Vision: Kindom Building for the 21st Century," the theme for this assembly became embodied in our worship together.

For many who have ever attended a General Assembly, the opportunities for corporate worship often become the highlight of their experiences. With both creativity and drawing upon the strengths of our tradition, it may be one of the few times in our lifetimes where we come together in a crowd of thousands of

people to offer praise and thanksgiving and receive from the Lord in both Word and Sacrament. In those times, of focusing upon our God, while our differences might remain, they dissipate, while our convictions remain firm, they are placed in humility within the context of the demonstrable oneness of our fellowship. (see below for some images of the opening worship)

With afternoon sessions, there were opportunities to hear firsthand and explore issues of importance whether it had to do with updates on the church in Cuba, or Palestine or concerns about responding to climate change. Later in the afternoon plenary, the co-moderators offered their report on their two years of experiencing the "best" of the church, while acknowledging the many issues that confront us to move forward. The rest of the afternoon session provided instruction to the commissioners and Advisory delegates about procedures, voting, the business agenda and nominations for ongoing committees. Over dinner, the Commissioners and Advisory delegates were provided an overview and orientation to the various agencies of the General Assembly. This is a real look into the "bones" and infrastructure that provides support for operations across the church that often are unknown or go unrecognized.

The highlight of the evening plenary revolved around the election of the next moderator or co-moderators. With one moderator candidate and two pairs of co-moderator candidates, each was afforded opportunity for opening statements as well responding to questions from the floor. From the Synod of the Trinity and Carlisle Presbytery, Chantal Atnip "stood" for election as moderator. Each of the candidates acquitted themselves well as they shared their love for Christ and this church. Many of the questions focused upon being the church in our contemporary times with all of the issues that surround our witness and our work in our world. In the end, the Assembly voted to elect Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri (REC, Tropical Florida) and Cindy Kohlmann (TEC, Boston) on the fourth ballot.

Please remember to pray for these individuals as they not only moderate over the next week, but represent the General Assembly over the next two years until the 224th General Assembly.

"Glimpses of GA"

[*Redstone people and worship*](#)

[*An Introvert's Guide to Surviving GA; A Reflection by Rev. Sue Washburn*](#)

[*Opening worship elements \(compliments of Foothills Presbytery\)*](#)

[*Orientation and voting process \(compliments of Jan Edmiston\)*](#)

[*Human trafficking presentation*](#)

[*Link for Live streaming plenary sessions \(in case you missed it\)*](#)

[*Sign up for the GA News \(on the right\)*](#)



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