



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



223rd General Assembly---Day 3

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

UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS

Monday morning activities began with a Bible Study led by Deborah Krause from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Entitled, "A Monumental Reading of Mark: Resisting domination and building the kin-dom of God," we were challenged to "kingdom" as an alternative way of expressing the sense of belonging within God's household (economy). Offering the gospel of Mark as an embodied good news that Jesus promises in contrast to the false claims of sovereignty and domination of Rome.

In the midst of this world, Jesus' message and ministry "interrogates" the spaces and structures of the first century through his words and actions retold in this gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ offers an alternative community and structures from all those that are promoted around us. For all of us, we also struggle with what it means for us today to "not be pressed down into the mold of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your imagination" (her translation of Romans 12:2)

After Bible study, commissioners resumed the work of the Assembly through their assigned committee responsibilities. In

each Assembly, the Stated Clerk has the responsibility of assigning overtures and reports to various committees, some of which are fairly standard and others that are formed for the particular issues of that gathering. In the 223rd Assembly, the following committees serve the whole assembly through their review, deliberation and recommendation.

01 Business Referral	06 Church Polity	11 Social Justice Issues
02 Bills and Overtures	07 Ecumenical and Interfaith	12 Middle East Issues
03 GA Procedures	08 Environmental Issues	13 Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment Loan Program, Presbyterian Publishing, and Presbyterian Foundation
04 The Way Forward	09 Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues	14 Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions
05 Mid Councils	10 Mission Coordination	

Your Commissioners and Young Adult Advisory Delegate are serving within this committee structure in the following ways.

Rev. Sue Washburn-Bills and Overtures

Rev. Wendy Keys-Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions

Rich Smith-Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Janie Short---Environmental Issues

Emily Hartz----Peacemaking, Immigration and International Issues

While we have sent and commissioned these persons, they are called here not to represent our presbytery, but to serve as those who seek to follow God and discern the leading of the Holy Spirit in concert with others who were called as well.

On this Monday, each committee works diligently in a morning, afternoon and evening session (just in case you thought participating in GA is a "vacation"). Some were dealing with significant issues of internal structures of our ministry together, others were focused on worship practices and theological positions, others were seeking to address issues of concern and conscience as a collective group. Just as a reminder, actions taken by committees are recommendations for consideration by the full General Assembly in plenary session. So, please remember to pray each day for each of our commissioners and all the commissioners as they seek to serve our God. You are also able to follow the business and actions of each committee throughout the General Assembly by accessing the website (www.pc-biz.org).

Of particular interest within the Presbytery of Redstone were both the overture on the South Sudan submitted by Shenango and endorsed by Redstone (09-02) for support and action and the commissioner resolution (11-21) offered by Rev. Sue Washburn on responding to people impacted by opioid abuse. I am happy to report that both items passed out of committee by overwhelming votes.

Over lunch today, I was privileged to hear "stories of transformation from around the world" presented by the Presbyterian World Mission of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The panel consisted of connections to South Sudan with presentations by Rev. Dave Carver (Pittsburgh Presbytery), Leisa Wagstaff (mission co-worker) and Rev. John Yor (General Secretary; Presbyterian Church of the South Sudan). As you know, our partnership in the South Sudan in with the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church, but we were able to hear real stories about the situation in South Sudan, but more importantly we reflected together on the real ways partnership can and must be reflected in our understanding of who we are as the Body of Christ and the mission of God in the world.

Additionally, later in the evening I had the opportunity to meet with other Mid-Council leaders to discuss and become better acquainted with the support and resources of our denomination for the mission of the church. These discussions included reflections upon the ways in which both PMA and OGA might be supportive of the ministry activities of presbyteries and local congregations.

All in all, it has been a busy, but productive full day of committee discussions and deliberations. Regardless of whether we agree with all of the decisions that are made in any Assembly, the people who volunteer to come and serve as commissioners work diligently to serve Christ in the church in this way. For their energy and efforts, the church as whole owes them a debt of gratitude for their willing and gracious service.

"Glimpses of GA"

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