



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



***222nd General Assembly---Day 1***  
**"The Hope in our Calling" Ephesians 1:18**

**UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS**

**"Hope does not disappoint"....**

***"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."(Romans 5;1-5)***

**Opening Worship**

**With the Moderator Heath Rada preaching a message of reconciliation by God's grace, he built upon the story of Joseph and his brothers and the "prodigal" who returns home. God's**

reconciliation seems to be a family affair. He reminded those gathered to worship that we have been called to be "one" with God and with each other. This will require risk and courage and opportunity to live it out, but God's grace overshadows even differences and arguments and celebration is our response of gratitude.

Directed and led in worship by the variety of music forms ranging from bell and vocal choirs to more contemporary instruments, our voices joined together in a mighty chorus throughout the convention center ballroom. "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!" In remembrance of Jesus, we were invited to the Lord's table that we might partake together .

### **First Day "Business"- (reports, orientation and elections)**

**Saying "Amen" - "a willingness to let God lead us on to guide our vision and actions."(Bishop Barnes)**

As the Assembly shifted into its initial "business" meeting this afternoon, participants paused to spend time reflecting upon recent acts of violence within our country, whether remembering Charleston, San Bernardino or Orlando, Using the words of Bishop Barnes, offered at a prayer vigil following the San Bernardino tragedy, we also were asked what comes after our "amen?" Both then and now, we were urged to *"let our 'amen' be a call to merciful discipleship in the name of our Lord Jesus."*

### **INTERNATIONAL "FLAVOR"**

Traditionally, one of the unnoticed, but important elements of the gatherings of General Assembly is the opportunity to hear from ecumenical delegates from around the world. This opening session was no exception with the invocation offered by a delegate from Indonesia, followed by greetings from a person from Bangladesh. In the evening session, all of the international Ecumenical Advisory Delegates from Latin America and the Caribbean were introduced. Then, greetings came from the delegate from Guyana and an invocation leading us in prayer by a Dominican representative. Surely, the body of Christ reflects every tribe and nation.

### **MODERATOR REPORT**

As his final report, Moderator emphasized the "results" of the conversations that he has been conducting over the past two years and summarizing the survey responses conducted by COGA in the past year. Speaking from the Romans 5 passage,

he emphasized that **"hope does not disappoint"** and focused on four areas of importance in our current church.

1. Faith formation
2. Congregational vitality
3. Justice for all people
4. Education

In each of these areas, while there have been important historic strengths for us as a denomination, nonetheless, we must remain open to what we might need to change, grow and innovate. This is our gospel imperative both as we are and as we become the church responsive to God's grace.

## **ORIENTATION**

Of course, we would not be Presbyterian if we were not acting "decently and in order," so the commissioners received an orientation on the "nuts and bolts" of conducting Assembly business. For those who were new, it may have seemed way too formal, but with a gathering of nearly 600 commissioners, such protocols become necessary to provide fairness in discussion and debate.

Additionally, instruction on reviewing the progress and status of bills/overtures using PC-Biz(which you can follow at home as well) as they prepare for committee work and plenary sessions. Sometimes, all of this preparation for orientation can become kind of "dry" stuff. Of course, with our Redstone commissioners, I "offered" to give them all a quiz on the various procedures after they were done.

## **ELECTION OF CO-MODERATORS**

With the changes in the manual, this General Assembly was afforded the option of considering candidates who were running as "co-moderator" candidates(vs. moderator/vice moderator). Both pairs of candidates chose to "run" as co-moderators and were presented before the General Assembly in plenary session thereby assuring the historic event of electing co-moderators. After a period of presentation and Q&A, the General Assembly voted on the first ballot to elect Rev. Jan Edmiston(Chicago) and Rev. Denise Anderson(National Capital) to serve as the co-moderators of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly.

## **WRAP-UP**

So, the first of many days has wrapped up and commissioners head off to hotels or other places of fellowship. The initial necessary responsibilities of orientation and election of

**moderators have been processed. Now, we will begin to move on to the other concerns before us. Yet, through it all on this first day, the excitement and energy of God's people being able to gather together to worship and to begin the work together laid the groundwork for the many days ahead. This is and will be our task over the next week in fulfillment of the *"hope in our calling."***

**"A Picture (or video) is Worth a Thousand Words" (select link below or for more pictures, see Presbytery of Redstone Facebook page)**

**[Redstone commissioners "eager" to begin](#)  
[Tom showing his diligence in preparation](#)  
[Bernice studying the details of today's agenda](#)  
[Opening worship choir](#)  
[Bells and more bells!](#)  
[Snapshots of "Hope in our Calling"](#)**



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