



For more information and for live streaming of the 223rd General Assembly please visit <https://ga-pcusa.org/> Daily GA News <https://ga-pcusa.org/general-assembly-news/>

*We Have a Winner

Donna Cammarata was the first one to identify all 3 people in the picture from Lake Erie.

Where's Waldo? Or actually 'Where's Lake Erie Presbytery?' The picture includes many of the representatives of the Synod of the Trinity at General Assembly. The first person who identifies the three people in the picture from Lake Erie (Doug Lee, Ruling Elder Commissioner; Ben Fugate, Young Adult Advisory Delegate and David Oyler, General Presbyter) and contacts the presbytery office wins a prize!! (Emily Zeig Lindsey was not in the picture because her committee was



"Empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit through Scripture, our confessions, and conscience the Presbytery of Lake Erie journeys with congregations, ruling elders and teaching elders as we live, grow, fellowship and witness to the work of God through Jesus Christ in today's changing world. Recognizing that we are called to serve all of God's children, we do this through shared prayer, worship, training, evangelism, and mission to strengthen the dynamic Body of Christ."

Greetings from St. Louis!

General Assembly Update, Wednesday, June 20

Today begins many, many decisions by the General Assembly Commissioners. But before they get to business decisions, the Assembly worships.

One of the highlights of General Assembly – usually in the middle of the gathering – is an Ecumenical Worship Service. It is a service that speaks to



the global nature of the body of Christ. The preacher was Rev. Najla Kassab, President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. She is also the first female pastor, ordained in 1993, in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria. She preached with passion in a sermon titled 'Towards a Kingdom of Reconciliation' in which she

spoke of her experience of being a minority religion in a stressed region of the world. But the leadership in the ecumenical service stretches around the globe. Worship leaders came from Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, France, Iran, El Salvador, South Sudan and Iraq. Communion was celebrated reflecting oneness in Christ.

Before moving on to other business it would be good to re-visit the march for justice on Tuesday here in St. Louis. Hundreds of people marched on an issue of significant social and financial inequity. Cash bail, sometimes as low as \$200, can keep people incarcerated for weeks and months if they have no ability to pay. While others, who have significant financial resources, are able to be released quite quickly. It is a matter that has an outsized

meeting at that time.) This image has been attached to the email.



Please remember to visit our website at:

<http://www.pbylakeerie.org>



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influence on those accused of non-violent crimes but have no available financial resources. The offering of \$47,000 was delivered at the end of the march. That pool of money will allow bail for dozens of people who have been accused of non-violent crime until the time of their trial. Social justice is a complex topic. It is also a topic that has a profound impact on many lives with limited support.

There has also been significant discussion in the hallways of the assembly hall on the topic of the separation of children from their parents along the Mexican border. While action may occur later in the Assembly, there has been a communication from the office of Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson. The statement includes the following statements, based upon previous positions adopted the PCUSA: 'We must not punish desperate parents by tearing their children away from them...What has this nation become? How have we wandered so far from Jesus' kind admonition, 'Let the little children come to me..for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs?' The full statement can be found on the pcusa.org website. This is, of course, a fluid conversation in our culture with significant theological implications.

Some of the actions (though certainly not all) taken on Wednesday, as well as reports received:

- The 'Reclaiming Jesus' movement was endorsed with a referral to Presbyterian Mission Agency for additional support materials.
- Voted to endorse the 'Letter from the Birmingham City Jail' and consider it for inclusion in the Book of Confessions.
- Tom Taylor was elected to another term as the president of the Presbyterian Foundation, a wonderful tool for churches for investment.
- First time in many years that participation in Board of Pensions coverage increased – by a remarkable 19%!
- Established an administrative commission to respond to internal issues within the Synod of the Covenant (the Synod that comprises the states of Ohio and Michigan).
- Voted to reaffirm the urgent need to be supportive of African American congregations.
- Received greetings from a wide range of Reformed Churches from around the world.
- General Assembly mission plans for 2019-2020 were approved.
- Approved exploring the formation of an advocacy committee for LGBTQIA+ people.
- Mission funding to support an evaluation of the 95 Native American church buildings, some of which are in need of significant attention.
- Support for providing materials in response to mental health issues.
- Received a report on 'Freedom Rising' – an initiative on the desperate plight of African American males. This effort is in need of increasing funding. It is also an overture that was endorsed by 2016 prior to its original adoption.
- Formally approved Diane Givens Moffett as the president/executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This is a key leadership position, filled by an exceedingly competent African American pastor from Salem Presbytery.

The final report from General Assembly will come to you early Monday morning. More news to follow!

Rev. David S. Oyler
General Presbyter