



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 meeting at that time.)



“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!



Still smiling at General Assembly –on Thursday afternoon. Left to right, Doug Lee, Emily Zeig Lindsey, Ben Fugate.

General Assembly, Thursday June 21 to Saturday June 23

The abundance of motions accelerates in the final days of General Assembly. It might be helpful to understand some of the financial implications of all these motions. The commissioners are faithfully informed on the financial impact of motions if they are approved. Some motions have no financial impact, for others it is relatively minor. But some of the motions have significant financial impact. The mission budget of the PCUSA is approximately \$70,000,000. The General Assembly per capita budget is approximately \$14,000,000. An approved motion in relationship to the mission budget, requires a reduction from other line items in the mission budget to keep it close to balanced. A motion with per capita implications,



leads to an overall General Assembly per capita increase.

In the case of the \$300,000+ for support of evaluation of Native American church buildings and \$350,000+ voted on Wednesday evening, those monies will be drawn from within the \$70,000,000 mission budget. It will require reductions in other areas.

After all the actions, the General Assembly per capita was voted as \$8.95 for 2019 and \$8.50 for 2020. These figures will be included in the proposed presbytery budget later this year as reflection of the hard work, and new initiatives taken by your commissioners at the 223rd General Assembly. At the same time, a new focus on evaluation of the funding and staffing of denominational needs has been undertaken.

Please remember to visit our website at:

<http://www.pbylakeerie.org>



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Actions and comments:

-A motion in support of prayers for South Sudan. South Sudan, as most of us know, has been in a state of civil war for years. Neighboring presbyteries Shenango and Redstone have a mission partnership with South Sudan. While they continue to be in partnership, it has been limited by this political unrest.

-A motion was made for an increased supportive presence in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, as well as motions on socio-economic policies in Central America.

-Commissioners Resolution 09-14 spoke to the Separation of Families along the Mexican border, strongly condemning the current practices. This action parallels the communication from Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson condemning the separation of families, many of whom are fleeing violence in their home countries.

-An action to support North Korean refugees. This is a fluid situation around which there were strong emotions on the best way to initiate Christian interaction with both South and North Koreans.

-Thursday morning worship was led by Rev. Floretta Barbee-Watkins, titled 'The Radical Difference'. 'We become tired Christians, and ministry becomes routine.'

-The Credo Luncheon featured Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler, Jr – an African American pastor - he spoke with great passion of the call for pastors to be pastor/prophet rather than pastor/priest. CREDO is a resource available to pastors, by invitation, that is a transformative 8 day retreat for renewal and redirection

-Memorial moments offered for former General Assembly moderators – Jack Rogers (who taught early in life at Westminster College and wrote extensively) and Ben Weir (long time mission co-worker, a one time hostage, and teacher at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut).

-The Committee on the Way Forward made their presentation on Thursday afternoon. The Way Forward has generated strong responses around A Corp, a Way Forward, 2020 vision and how their work links together. As many of you are aware, there has been increasing concern around disconnect between the Office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In addition there has been disagreement over Shared Services expenses, generating income with a declining membership pool. The recommended action was voted 474-47 by the General Assembly. This action reduces the A Corp Board in size (previously composed of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board) but expands the organizations from which the Board will be drawn. Their work will involve thorough, transformational study, building trust and transparency, review of

long term funding through per capita and organizational clarity.

-Encouraged creating resources in governing body meetings for people who have the need of hearing and vision support.

-Thursday evening the commissioners took a break from their rigorous work to enjoy a concert by Grammy winning jazz/gospel saxophonist Kirk Whalum. The concert is in support of the 'Hands and Feet' initiative of service, learning and public witness commitment in host cities – St. Louis this year and Baltimore in 2020. It was a most delightful respite in the midst of a full week.

-Friday morning found the Assembly diving into the complex topic of environmental issues, including statements on environmental racism and environmental justice.

-One of the highly anticipated topics at GA 223 was the question of divesting from companies that produce fossil fuels. A motion had been brought to direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to divest from fossil fuel and actively invest in securities that focus on renewable energy. This concern had generated overtures from 40 presbyteries. As you might imagine, this is a complex issue. Divesting has market implications. It has theological implications. It has personal implications as many Presbyterians, including in our own presbytery, are employed in the fossil fuels industry. After four hours of conversation the minority report was adopted 332-178 as the main motion; which then was approved 409-106. This minority report encourages continuing conversation with these companies over the impact that fossil fuels have on the environment. Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) has indicated that divestment might be an option in the future but MRTI was not directed to pursue it at this time.

-The Social Justice Committee addressed a number of issues – racism, the plight of black girls/women in our culture, concern for Puerto Rico, condemnation of racist, unjust disparagement of people and nations, gun violence and the death penalty. More information about these topics can be found under pc-biz, Social Justice Committee.

-The commissioners worked long and hard on Friday evening – well past midnight. But most of them were back at their seats at 9:00 AM on Saturday.

-Saturday is a 'wrap up' day as all work is to be completed by 12:00 PM. They addressed final budgetary concerns, including the establishment of General Assembly per capita included above, and the mission budget. Thanks was expressed to Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery and a video was shared about the host for the 2020 General Assembly – Baltimore Presbytery. And, with great thanksgiving to God, the commissioners concluded with worship late Saturday morning.

You can learn more about the 223rd General Assembly by hearing from your commissioners at the presbytery meeting on June 26. See you there!

-Rev. David S. Oyler
General Presbyter