

June 23, 2014 | |

221st GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Report from Gordon Raynal, Presbytery Pastor and Stated Clerk

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

I'm back in the office after nine days away for the 221st General Assembly in Detroit. This morning I want to write you a brief note and point you to, what I trust will be helpful, resources for the coming discussions about the actions of this General Assembly.

First, let me remind you of the names of our six Commissioners, our TSAD (Theological Student Advisory Delegate) and YAAD (Young Adult Advisory Delegate):

Ruling Elders:

Mary Boggs - Flat Rock Church
Bill Fuller - John Knox Presbyterian Church
Lynn Norton - Seneca Presbyterian Church

Teaching Elders:

Andy Casto Waters - Fountain Inn Church
Beverly Kelly - Honorably Retired
Steve Rhodes - Second Church, Spartanburg

TSAD:

Ridgely Beckett - Columbia Seminary (First, Spartanburg)

YAAD:

Anna Catherine Caldwell - Easley Church.

Please remember to thank them for their service. They will all be writing written reports of their experience at GA for the August meeting of Presbytery.

Second, and before touching on the matters of controversy, I want to report that the most of

the work of the General Assembly is for the good ordering and upbuilding of the Presbyterian Church USA. The Commissioners and Advisory Delegates receive and process and deal with the whole spectrum of our work of our shared mission and ministry. The Assembly faithfully dealt with a host of issues relating to our shared work that enliven our life together. While the controversial issues draw the most attention and concern, and while they certainly garner the media's attention, the most of the time and the most of the work of the Assembly was all about what draws us together as a national church.

Below is information from the Presbyterian Outlook. The Outlook produces a summary report in the form of a handy bulletin insert. If you have not ordered these, Foothills Presbytery owns the rights for the insert and we will be receiving it today. Please contact us if you want to get a master copy. Under our Presbytery rights you will have the ability to make as many copies as you need for your bulletins, newsletters or other means of publication. [Link to FREE Bulletin Insert](#)

Also below is information that deals with the controversial decision about same gender marriage. It contains a pastoral letter to all our congregations from the Moderator, Mr. Heath Rada, Ruling Elder from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, and our Stated Clerk, Grayde Parsons, concerning the actions of the General Assembly regarding marriage and an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) regarding the Authoritative Interpretation and the proposed Amendment to the Constitution. I trust these pieces will be helpful to inform our Sessions and congregations about the actual actions and their consequences. While both the Authoritative Interpretation and the proposed Amendment are highly controversial, both are non-applicable to us in Foothills Presbytery because their practical effects only apply in States where same gender marriage is legal.

A word about process: when we receive the proposed amendments to the Constitution they will be forward to the Unity and Community Team who have the role of being the Bills and Overtures Committee for Foothills. It is their duty to receive and study the proposed overtures. As we have in the past when highly controversial issues are set before us, the Unity and Community Team will work to help us have the appropriate communications and the appropriate forums to study, discuss and be ready to vote. Foothills Presbytery usually votes on the Overtures at the Winter Stated Meeting and I anticipate that is when we will do our voting.

As I become aware of other resources that will help us together walk through the issues and controversies, I will forward them to you.

Grace and Peace,

Gordon

Gordon Raynal
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Foothills Presbytery
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**General Assembly is over. Now your work begins.
We can simplify it for you.**

Order tonight and we'll email you in time to print for worship tomorrow.

Greetings friend in Christ,

The 221st General Assembly has wrapped up its work, but your task of grasping and interpreting its actions will take days, weeks, months. We want to help your interpretive process get off to a good start.

Leslie Scanlon and I will aggregate the reports written by our Presbyterian Outlook news team and prepare a bulletin insert that will summarize the major and most easily misunderstood actions.

All you will need to do is to order the insert, and we'll email the master to you, which you can then print in whatever quantity you would like to use. (We'll also provide a large print version.) In fact, to those who purchase the insert we give permission to share with your whole congregation via email and/or posting on your own website.

All of this is yours for just \$29.95 (discounted to \$19.95 for congregations of less than 250 members).

Yes, you'll be able to receive and disseminate the news at Internet speed.

This is my promise to you: our reporting will be scrupulously accurate and non-anxious. If the bulletin is not to your liking, just let us know and we will refund the full purchase price, no questions asked.

Bless you!

Jack Haberer, Editor

[Order the Insert](#)

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Same Gender Marriage

[Link to FAQ's](#)

June 19, 2014

To congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):
Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Earlier today, the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a recommendation from its Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues allowing for pastoral discretion to perform "any such marriage they believe the Holy Spirit calls them to perform," where legal by state law.

They also approved a recommendation to change language in the Book of Order to indicate that "marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman."

Both decisions came with much thought, discussion, and prayer, and clearly the entire body that is the PC(USA) will be interpreting these actions for some time.
Please know that the same triune God in whom we place our hope, faith, and trust in is still in control, and that the assembly's action today is the result of deep discernment to hear God's voice and discern God's will.

We concur with the feelings expressed by Teaching Elder Commissioner Jeffrey Bridgeman, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues, during his presentation to the assembly.

"The apostle Paul tells us that ours is, in fact, 'the ministry of reconciliation' as 'ambassadors of Christ,' and he died for us so that we might be reconciled, that we might become reconcilers," Bridgeman said.

In this season of both happiness and sadness over the assembly's decisions, we call on you to remember the overflowing grace and love God gifts us with, and to take seriously our charge to bestow the same grace and love on one another.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heath K. Rada". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruling Elder Heath K. Rada
Moderator, 221st General Assembly (2014)



The Reverend Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

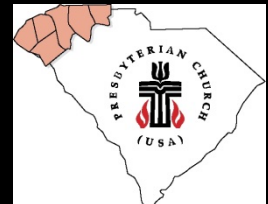


Ruling Elder Linda Bryant Valentine
Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency



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