

LEADERSHIP IN DENOMINATIONAL AGENCIES:

- Presbyterian Mission Agency - Assembly confirmed the election of the **Rev. Diane Moffett** as its new President/Executive Director.
- Presbyterian Foundation - Assembly confirmed **the Rev. Dr. Tom Taylor** for a third term as President and Chief Executive Officer.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: There will be some recommendations to changes in the constitution that will require the approval of the majority of the 170 presbyteries throughout our nation. The Presbytery of Philadelphia will vote on these recommendations at our November meeting.



Confessional Declaration from 223rd Assembly on the Role of the Church

*As confessing Christians,
we trust God, whom we know through Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray as others pray in other names.*

*We are obligated to declare our concerns about the
direction towards autocracy that our country is taking.
We say Yes to God's power of love and justice for the
neighbor as well as the self, and we say
No to demonic power that urges hate of the other,
scatters blame, and creates civic discord.*

*We say Yes to our imperfect democracy with one person,
one vote, and No to any corruption of our elections.*

*We say Yes to universal health care
and No to care based on the ability to pay.*

*We say Yes to safe schools, houses of worship,
and public gathering places;
and No to civilian access to assault
and/or military-style weapons.*

*We say Yes to core human values and No to
dividing our humanity by ideology and partisanship.*

*We say Yes to bridges and preservation
of families and No to walls.*

*We say Yes to affirming and celebrating the
full spectra of human identity
and No to discrimination and bigotry.*

We say: In life, and in death we belong to God."



223rd General Assembly – St. Louis, Missouri “Kin-dom” Building for the 21st Century A Renewed Witness and Call to Christian Action Framed in Worship and Biblical Reflection

Major Decisions and/or Recommendations to Presbyteries for Consideration
*(prepared by the Presbytery of Philadelphia on June 23, 2018
with information gathered from both personal witness
and General Assembly News)*

This is a brief summary of major actions or statements made by 223rd General Assembly. **Please note:** there were many other actions as well as overtures that were either defeated in committee or on the floor of the Assembly. For a full and detailed accounting of debates and decisions, please connect to Presbyterian Church (USA) website:

<https://ga-pcusa.org/general-assembly-news/>.

All items can also be found in their raw form: www.pc-biz.org



CO-MODERATORS ELECTED: Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri (Presbytery of Tropical Florida) and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann (Presbytery of Boston) were elected in a 4th ballot by the 223rd General Assembly – making it the first time that a person of Latino heritage has been elected to this role. This is also the second time co-moderators have been elected.

THE WAY FORWARD: After two-years of discernment, the recommendations of the Way Forward Commission were presented to the Assembly's Way Forward Committee (Led by our own Rev. Cindy Jarvis) with these highlights of assembly actions:

- Appoint a team to **review the current per capita structure** used to pay for ministry beyond the local congregation (ie. presbytery, synod, national office). This team is to report back to the next Assembly.
- Approved the restructure of the governance of the denomination by taking its corporate entity out of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and establishing an **independent intra-agency arm – A Corp** – which will be responsible for shared services, facilities, legal services and other areas. The hope is to allow for the PMA, under its new leadership, to focus on ministry.
- Affirm the **spiritual and constitutional leadership of the Office of the Stated Clerk** as “chief ecumenical officer and primary representative“ of our denomination.
- A **‘Moving Forward Implementation Team’** to ensure compliance with General Assembly's recommendations and encourage cooperation with all agencies of our denomination.

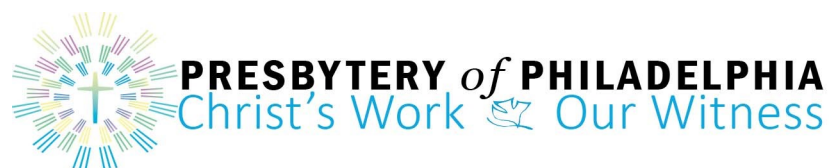
PER CAPITA: After much conversation and the appointment of special committees to examine national funding structure, the Assembly approved per capita at \$8.95 per member for the years 2019 and 2020. Per capita is the financial vehicle used to fund the connectional church beyond the local congregation. This amount will be added to the Synod of the Trinity and Presbytery of Philadelphia per capita amounts, making our TOTAL recommended per capita \$29.25 for 2019.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS:

- In an ongoing effort to build bridges with Christians of other traditions, the Assembly confirmed ongoing conversations with both the **Episcopal Church in America and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops**.
- The Assembly adopted the development of a **relationship with Gereja Maseh Injili di Minahasa**, an Indonesian language communion of the Reformed Protestant tradition.
- The Assembly reaffirmed our commitment to **developing interfaith relationships** and to denounce any and all language that condones violence, hate or bias based on religious identity.

PEACEMAKING, IMMIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES:

- Encouraged congregations to pray for the victims of human rights violations in North Korea; prepare for possibility of reunification on **Korean peninsula** and encourage presbyteries to work with national Korean caucus.
- The Assembly approved a call upon our government to **reunite families separated at borders** and to notify parents of their children's whereabouts as soon as possible. They also denounced the detaining of families at military bases or other government entities.
- Offered prayers and articulated concerns for the circumstances and people in nations around the world, such as **El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Yemen, Madagascar, South Sudan, Korean Peninsula, and Central America**.



MIDDLE EAST: Assembly encouraged efforts initiated by Israelis and Palestinians to “come together in building honest understanding and peace, working together to address inequality to pave the way to reconciliation.” In response to recent violence in Gaza, the Assembly denounced the violence and reaffirmed PCUSA's commitment to and call for an end of the blockade of Gaza by Israel; urged US and international support for basic human values for all Palestinians and Israelis despite the lack of a peace process.

SOCIAL JUSTICE – ONGOING PUBLIC WITNESS:

- **Decade of Intercultural Transformation 2020-2030** – in response to changing cultural demographics, a task force will develop guidelines to equip and help the church embody the Gospel in our current reality.
- **Puerto Rico-** Assembly directed PCUSA to take strategic steps to support the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in its response to the most recent economic crisis caused by Hurricane Maria that has impacted hospitals, education, and continuing access to electricity and water.
- **Sexual Misconduct:** Called the PCUSA to “transparency and decisive action” in response to clergy and other's misconduct that has historically compromised the most vulnerable among us.
- **Black Women and Girls:** Not unlike the previous General Assembly that addressed the “Worsening Plight of the African American Male,” this Assembly voted to respond to ongoing disparities experienced by black women and girls.
- **Gun Violence:** in response to growing concern, curriculum for the church will be developed on how to prevent gun violence.

ENVIRONMENT - CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT OVER DIVESTMENT: The Assembly approved **continued engagement** with corporations engaged in production of fossil fuels rather than divestment. Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) shared what they perceived to be positive movement that has been made with environmental alliances through engagement. MRTI has been directed to continue to apply pressure on fossil fuel producing corporations and report back results to the 224th General Assembly.

POLITY AND CHURCH ORDERS: Approved a study on **family leave**, which will be brought back to 224th GA in response to growing concerns regarding the need for the church to model the care of its employees, especially after the birth or adoption of children.

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES, CHURCH GROWTH AND INSTITUTIONS

- The assembly voted to **create a task force** to develop a **guiding letter to accompany the Confession of Belhar from South Africa** – a letter that would explore the confession's themes of racism, reconciliation, and repentance in the U.S. context.
- The Assembly voted to begin the process for possibly adopting Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s **“Letter from Birmingham Jail”** as a confession to be added to our Book of Confessions. This would include resources that will help Christian study, liturgy and worship.
- The Assembly approved overtures celebrating the gifts and **affirming the dignity of LGBTQIA+** people in church and society.
- Faith Formation - encouraged the Presbyterian Mission Agency to, as it supports ministry in Christian formation, transition to an emphasis on lifelong Christian education and faith formation, especially **intergenerational ministry**.
- Approved the appointment of the **Rev. Dr. Alton B. Pollard III as the new president of Louisville Theological Seminary**