



Our denominations national gathering, General Assembly, meets every 2 years to do the work of the larger church together. They finished up their meeting last Saturday afternoon (June 23<sup>rd</sup>) after a number of long and hard work days. Days began with optional Bible Studies on the nature of the “kingdom” how we are in relationship with each other and our neighbors. There was worship throughout the day, which either began or ended plenary sessions, making sure the work of the commissioners was rooted in worship to God. Some of the highlights of action from the week include:

-The election of our new co-moderators to serve as co-moderators not just at the national gathering but over the next two years acting almost as an ambassador. Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri of the Presbytery of Tropical Florida and the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann of the presbyteries of Boston and Northern New England were elected as one of the first orders of business for the week.

-The 223rd General Assembly’s Mission Coordination Committee voted unanimously to recommend the confirmation of the Rev. Diane Moffett as president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

-Commissioners approved The Way Forward committee’s recommendation, which will change the structure of the denomination’s corporate entity, strive for cost equity among the various shared services delivered to the church’s six agencies and create a Moving Forward Implementation Commission to make course corrections that will be necessary between the current Assembly and the next.

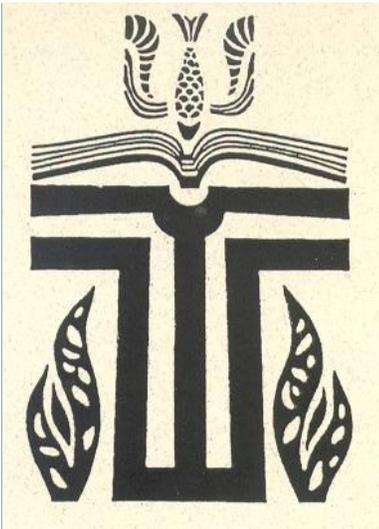
-Approval of forming a task force to study, work, pray and discern on the issue of paid family leave and to bring a report for implementation to the 2020 Assembly. Currently there is no family or parental leave policy in our denomination. Some presbyteries have a presbytery wide policy otherwise it is different from church to church with some churches offering nothing and others offering weeks of paid leave.

-The assembly decided to not invest from fossil fuels but continue through engagement though the Youth Advisory Delegates (youth sent from each presbytery) and Mission Advisory Delegates (currently serve in Costa Rica, East Africa, Eastern Europe, Indonesia, Israel/Palestine, Mexico and Guatemala, South Asia and South Sudan) almost unanimously advised the commissioners to divest. The Youth and Mission Advisory Delegates do not receive a vote during the plenary sessions like commissioners but a pole is taken to show how they would vote if they could to advise the commissioners. This was one of the most heated debates of the whole gathering and lasted a number of hours. Ultimately, the decision means the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee will continue to engage in the fossil fuel companies and will come back to the 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly with recommendations about divestment in the future.



## Good News Gazette

First Presbyterian  
Church of  
Chester, NY  
94-96 Main Street  
Chester, NY 10918



### **Per Capita Reminder:**

Per Capita for the year is \$37. It was collected for our second offering in Feb. If you missed this collection please get it into the church office as soon as you can. Thank you!

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-Commissioners voted to approve an increase in the per capita rate to \$8.95 for the next two years. Per capita funding is the only source of revenue for the work of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). It funds the biennial meetings of the General Assembly, the denomination's records and statistics, the work of the stated clerk and co-moderators of the General Assembly, mid council relations, shared costs with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, ecumenical relations and 62% of the budget of the Presbyterian Historical Society. Commissioners delayed this vote the first night in an attempt to assure the increase covers the financial implications of all actions taken by this assembly.

We trust the work of the Spirit across the gathered assembly last week and all the decisions that were made. We pray the Spirit continues to work through those decisions and continues to guide us in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

As the gathered assembly last week was may we also strive to be guided by the Spirit in our work—from our daily lives and the simple tasks to sharing our faith and witnessing to Christ. All to the glory of God.

Pastor Erin

### **NEW T-SHIRTS**

Our T-shirt are in and they look great! If you haven't yet picked yours up, this is your friendly reminder to please do so soon. Also, if you missed out, we did order a few extra for \$10 each. Please see Pastor Erin for your shirt(s) or if you didn't order but would still like to try and get one.

### **CHICKEN BBQ THANK YOU!**

Thank you all for a very successful Chicken BBQ, where the final total was \$1,918 raised to help support our congregation and ministry in Chester. We hope to have a follow-up meeting soon to talk about what worked well and where we can still improve, but we hope to plan for another BBQ in September!

## MORE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

-On Peacemaking, Immigration International, and Social Witness, highlights:

Approved a series of actions to promote “the welfare of our neighbors in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.” Aimed at developing “a United Witness in the Americas,” the actions include creating the position of a mission co-worker “to facilitate a Meso-American faith-rooted advocacy witness in Central America” along with partners in the region. The Assembly also called for investing in peacemaking to reduce migration and for increased funding of leadership training in the region.

Approved a resolution seeking peace on the Korean Peninsula. The resolution designates September 2018 as “Korean mission month” and calls Presbyterians to “pray for peace in the Korean Peninsula and for victims of division and conflict on both sides of the Korean Peninsula.”

Approved an overture to declare the period from 2020 to 2030 as the “Decade of Intercultural Transformation” by focusing on transformative priorities and initiatives across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and providing strategic steps to move the PC(USA) into being a transformative church in this intercultural era.

Approved a resolution calling for the PC(USA) to pray for a movement of the Spirit to engage Presbyterian congregations in a nationwide action to prevent gun violence.

Approved an overture that calls for an immediate moratorium on the imposition of the death penalty in all jurisdictions that impose capital punishment and for the commutation of all death sentences to sentences of life imprisonment.

## LOOKING AHEAD

July 2 – No Bible Study

July 8 – Communion Sunday

July 9 – Bible Study at 19 Main St. 10 am

July 16– No Bible Study

July 23 - Bible Study at 19 Main St. 10 am, Food Pantry Truck time TBD

July 26 – Food Pantry Distribution 4-7pm

July 30– No Bible Study

Pastor Erin will be away July 13th-July 20th and July 28-August 3rd if there is a pastoral emergency please contact a Session member.

*If you have an article or announcement you would like to have in the next newsletter, please have it into the church office by July 19th.*

### July Second Offering

Our second offering for July 22<sup>nd</sup> will be for the Deacons’ Fund. The Deacons’ do such great work but their funds have run a little low this year. Please consider helping them in their efforts in serving our congregation and community so well.

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