

TPC friends, this statement was made as our General Assembly began its work in St. Louis in June. GA meets every other year to address questions and ideas that we have put forth as members of the PCUSA. The GA meeting is composed of ministers and ruling elders in equal numbers, who have been elected from their regions by congregations (through their presbytery). Our system of governance is a model from which the US government developed its rules. All of us do not necessarily agree with everything as it is voted up or down, but we DO have a say in how our national church proceeds. Please read the summary of the GA included in this newsletter, as well as Rev. Dr. Nelson's statement on families being separated at our southern border. I wish you peace in these days, Vicki

**Statement from the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, at the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA, June 16, 2018, St. Louis, Missouri**

As Presbyterians gather for the meeting of our 223rd General Assembly, we are mindful of the many issues of justice, peace and compassion we face, both as citizens of the United States and members of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we face issues of peace on the Korean peninsula, tragic injustice in the Middle East, and the spectre of climate change in our nation and our world, there is nothing of more urgency than the tragedy that is unfolding at our borders, where children are ripped from their parents and placed in holding cells, while their frantic parents scream in agony at the separation.

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"? How can this be happening in a nation in which so many claim the traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and the critical importance of families to the fabric of our lives together?

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of this policy is the willingness of the highest legal official of our nation to suggest that if a mother has fled violence in her own country to save herself and her children but has not had a chance to make a proper petition for safety in the U.S., she should be taught a lesson by having her children taken from her. It is almost incomprehensible that these acts should be used as a warning to others who would come.

What makes matters worse is the audacity of quoting the Apostle Paul's admonition to believers in Romans 13:1 to obey the law (presumably whatever the law says), while ignoring the higher scriptural demand that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

The crisis of tens of thousands of desperate people coming to the United States for relief seems almost overwhelming. But as the officials of our government attempt to address the crisis, we cannot afford to tarnish the highest values of our nation. We must not punish desperate parents by tearing their children away from them, leaving the parents without access to the children or assurance of their welfare.

In the name of God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stop!

In the faith we share,

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

# Wee Kirk Gazette

## Tappahannock Presbyterian Church

The Most Welcoming Presbyterian Church in Essex County

Volume 21—Issue 19— July 2018



TPC joyfully received **Steve Crawford** and **Penny Geiger** as members on June 17, 2018. Please welcome them when you see them. May our congregation be a blessing to them, as they are to us!





**August 4<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>**, The Westmoreland Players presents “**The Fortune Hunters**,” a new adaptation of the classic comedy *The Beaux’ Stratagem*, by John Farquhar. Our own **Tyler Sanders** plays the part of a local parson!! Please purchase tickets online at <https://www.westmorelandplayers.org/the-fortune-hunters> or by calling 804-529-9345.

**Plot summary:** Posing as a well-to-do gentleman and his manservant, Aimwell and Archer—two recently impoverished rakes—take to the country seeking to secure wealthy women as wives and so refill their own coffers. While Aimwell sets his sights on eminently eligible bachelorette Dorinda, Archer angles toward her sister-in-law, the most unhappily married Mrs. Sullen. Gaining the interest of their respective targets and access to the house where the ladies live, Aimwell and Archer set out to take hold of the ladies’ wealth before they can be exposed. Complications arise when the two gentlemen actually fall in love with the ladies, prompting their inherent honesty and chivalry. The ensuing action creates a wild whirl of schemes, revealing amorous declarations and practical plots that propel the play to its happy end. Sword fighting! Madcap action! Thieves and heroes! The 18th century never was so much fun!

**\*\*\*\*\*Save The Date\*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*September 16<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 10:30 am** - Our annual **River Service and Picnic** with the congregation of Zion Baptist Church, Chance is scheduled for Sept. 16 at 10:30 am. We celebrate this wonderful day at the Hughes home, and directions will be available nearer to the date.

**\*\* August 19<sup>th</sup>**— an afternoon Chamber Concert featuring Alyssa McKeithen-oboe, Tabatha Easley— flute, and Tiffany Valvo— Clarinet. In continuing our series of music programs at TPC, we are happy to have three talented VCU music instructors perform for us and our community. P.S. Alyssa is Vicki’s daughter, who shared her talents with us earlier this year at a morning service.

**JULY CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY 1PM**, June 26 through July 10 is a break for Bible Study, which will resume July 17.

**July 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>** - Pastor Vicki will be away on a two-week vacation. When our pastor is away, reach out to any session member (phone numbers listed inside every bulletin cover), or to Mandy in the church office, if you have an immediate need.

**July 15<sup>th</sup>**, after the service, those who wish to serve as ushers or greeters are invited to stay for a brief training session. Johnny F and Vicki will provide training, and we welcome any ideas you might have.

**July 17<sup>th</sup>** at 6 pm- Session meeting.

**Summer Coffee & Conversation- Beginning July 25<sup>th</sup>**, each Wednesday from 9:30am- 11:30am. Stop by for a few minutes, or stay awhile! 9:30-11:30 am. We will have a light breakfast available; all ages welcome!

**August 25<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 9-2 pm** - Our annual **All-Congregation Planning Retreat** is scheduled for August 25 at the Hughes’ home. Please come to celebrate our church as we plan for a new year and honor our service to God. Directions to their home will be available nearer to the date.

**July Birthdays**

Penny Geiger	4
Susan Hillyer	7
Janice Canby	12
Betty Dyer	15
Virginia Hillyer	19
Jamie Davis	23
Sally Reger	24
Deb Booze	27
John Hardy	28
Marie Minor	28



**August Birthdays**

Jo Dowdy	9
Geoff Lam	3
LeighAnn Matthews	20
Susan Spage	23





# RENEWING THE VISION: *Kindom building for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

by Leslie Scanlon, *Outlook* national reporter

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## The 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) St. Louis, Missouri - June 16-23, 2018

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**Presbyterians took to the streets at the 2018 General Assembly, with hundreds marching from the convention center to the City Justice Center with \$47,200 in donations - money the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) collected during opening worship, and which was used to bail out people incarcerated for minor offenses who could not afford to pay their fines or make bail.**

It's a "passion for ministry and the love of Jesus that drives us out of the church and into the streets," J. Herbert Nelson, stated clerk of the PC(USA), said during a midweek rally.

This was a General Assembly that felt viscerally linked to the news of the day: climate change, immigrant parents being separated from their children at the borders, gun violence.

Over and over, this question came up: ***How to put faith into action?***

Floretta Barbee-Watkins, pastor of The Avenue Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, preached that it's easy to get discouraged, but Jesus, faith and love move people forward even when they are weary. The PC(USA) has "made some bad biscuits," Barbee-Watkins said, but confession and a willingness to "deal with the urgent needs of our siblings and the church" propel Christians to action. She challenged: "Beloved, rise up, let's make some new biscuits."

**Climate change.** The assembly voted 332-178 to continue corporate engagement with oil and natural gas companies, working through the denomination's Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee, rather than to divest the PC(USA)'s holdings in fossil fuel companies. This was one of the hardest-fought issues at the assembly, with 40 presbyteries supporting an overture for fossil fuel divestment, saying the church has waited long enough to act to protect the earth, and with others contending it's better to stay at the table and use the investments as leverage to push for industry changes.

**Family separation.** The assembly voted 484-34 to approve a resolution calling for an immediate end to the government's policy of separating parents from children as migrants attempt to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. It calls for federal authorities to promptly reunite parents and children who have been separated, and to place families "under the care of the community," rather than in detention.



**Per capita.** The assembly approved a General Assembly per capita rate of \$8.95 per member for 2019 and \$8.95 for 2020 – up from \$7.73 per member in 2018. That was a source of constant tension during this assembly: How to meet urgent ministry needs, from drug addiction to mental health to ministry with small churches, while not raising per capita so high it raises resistance from mid councils and congregations?

**The Way Forward.** The assembly approved a report from the Way Forward Commission, which the 2016 General Assembly created to consider changes needed at the top levels of the denomination. The action will mean a new, more equitable governance structure for the PC(USA), A Corporation (a secular corporation used to conduct church business). Also part of that proposal: a financial sustainability study and a commitment to translate PC(USA) resources into languages other than English.

**Leadership.** Taking four ballots to do so, the assembly elected as its co-moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann, an educator and a mid council leader, a ruling elder and a minister, two “audacious, spirited, bold, unapologetic women,” as Cintrón-Olivieri put it. She is a native of Puerto Rico, for whom Spanish is her first language.

**Race and inequality.** From preaching to marching to overtures, the need to confront structural racism and systemic inequality echoed through this gathering. As a sign of that commitment, the assembly voted 352-160 to begin the long process of adding Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” to the PC(USA)’s Book of Confessions.

**World concerns.** The assembly spoke to concerns around the world — including in Yemen, Korea, South Sudan and Nicaragua. One tangible example: The assembly agreed to make the PC(USA) a partner with a Salvadoran church working to reduce gang-related violence in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador — violence that’s causing people to flee for their safety.

**#MeToo.** The assembly voted 474-19 to have the PC(USA) confess its failure to listen to survivors of pastoral sexual misconduct; to report annually the number of sexual misconduct charges brought in the denomination; and to set up a task force of survivors of sexual abuse.

**Social justice.** This assembly felt pulled to public advocacy. It called for a moratorium on imposing the death penalty. It asked Presbyterians to pray for a movement of the Spirit to end gun violence. It voted to affirm the dignity and humanity of people of all sexual orientations. Time and again, the assembly acted to tell the world, “This is what Presbyterians stand for.”

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