



**YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATE  
POST-ELECTION RESOURCES**

FEBRUARY 2012

## WELCOME!

Congratulations on your election as a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) to the 220th General Assembly (2012) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Your participation in the life of the PC(USA) in general and as a YAAD in particular is valued highly. I look forward to meeting you in Pittsburgh.

As the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, I have the overall responsibility for the arrangements for the General Assembly meeting. Staff of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), assisted by volunteers from across the church, are involved in planning for the upcoming activities in Pittsburgh. Our primary goal in all these arrangements is to enable commissioners and advisory delegates to carry out their responsibilities in the highest council of the PC(USA).

This handbook is one of the resources we have developed to help you understand your role as a YAAD and assist you as you prepare for the assembly. We hope it will provide some practical information about preparations, as well as more substantive material about the General Assembly and what you can expect during your week in Pittsburgh.

Please read through this handbook carefully, along with other materials you will receive from the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

OGA staff are ready to assist you with any questions throughout your preparation for service as a YAAD. You can contact them at **888-728-7228, ext. 5111**, or **tyler.gibson@pcusa.org**.

In addition, four volunteer assembly assistants will be in Pittsburgh to help coordinate special activities for YAADs and provide any additional assistance on-site. You'll get to know them much better in July.

This gathering holds the promise of being an exciting and important event in the life of our church. I pray that it holds true for your own life as well. May God's blessings be with you as you prepare for your important service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gradye Parsons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gradye Parsons  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

## GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU IN JESUS CHRIST!

You have been chosen to serve as a young adult advisory delegate to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Not everyone will be able to have this experience and you are among the few. Your attendance and participation will be shared with many others and will also be uniquely your own.

You will be in the midst of a group of people that is extremely diverse—from all over the country, all kinds of backgrounds, a wide range of ethnicities and cultures, different theological understandings, and varieties of opinions. Just as you are, everyone is a beloved child of a living God and all are at the General Assembly to serve.

We are looking forward to working with you! Below is information regarding the four YAAD advisors as well as the staff of the Office of the General Assembly that will work with you before and at the assembly.

### YAAD ADVISORS:

#### Laura Cheifetz

The Reverend Laura Mariko Cheifetz is a double pastors' kid who grew up in small-town Oregon and Washington. She studied for her Master of Divinity at McCormick Theological Seminary and her Master of Business Administration at North Park University. Laura formerly directed a Lilly-funded project working with Asian American, African American and Latin American young adults and pastors at McCormick. She now serves as director of alumni relations and development at The Fund for Theological Education in Atlanta, Georgia, working with more than 6,000 FTE fellows and alumni/ae and with new pastors through the Transition into Ministry program of the Lilly Endowment.

#### Kevin Hay

Kevin Hay lives in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he serves as the Presbyterian campus minister reaching out to the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) and Cape Fear Community College (CFCC). He has been serving as the campus minister since 2008 upon graduation from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Prior to seminary, Kevin attended Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and had a short career in banking for a few years in Birmingham, Alabama. Kevin is a "PK" raised in the churches of FPC—Marietta, Georgia, FPC—Selma, Alabama, and South Highland Presbyterian Church—Birmingham, Alabama. Kevin has a "look-alike" older brother—Robert Hay Jr.—who will also be helping at General Assembly (GA) as one of the "blue-apron guys." When Kevin isn't spending time with college students or hanging out on the beach, he enjoys live music, movies, and sports.

#### Ellie Johns

Ellie comes to us from Warren, Pennsylvania, where she serves as pastor of First Presbyterian Church. Ellie enjoys the privilege of serving the church at large as well. Currently, she is the regional representative of the Seminary Support Network for the Synod of the Trinity. In addition, she serves on the synod's Campus Ministry Task Force, is a member of the Presbytery of Lake Erie's Administrative Committee, and is a member of the presbytery's board of trustees. Raised in Erie, Ellie graduated from Muskingum College with a B.S. in Biology. Directly after college she entered seminary. She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2000. She was ordained by the Presbytery of Lake Erie that same year. In her free time, Ellie enjoys gardening, training for marathons, and racing sailboats in the Erie Yacht Club Spinnaker Fleet on the crew of the good ship, Downtime.

#### Jeff Moles

Jeff Moles lives in Nashville, Tennessee, where he is a ruling elder at Second Presbyterian Church. He works with the homeless community as a member of the staff of Room In The Inn, a nonprofit where he began working in 2006 during his year of service as a PC(USA) young adult volunteer. Jeff plays the piano and enjoys leading music and worship in a variety of settings, including national church conferences and the alleyways of downtown Nashville.

## OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY STAFF:

Deb Davies, *Meeting Manager*

Tyler Gibson, *YAAD Liaison*

Kay Moore, *GA Business Manager*

Kerry Rice, *Meeting Manager*

Linda Spence, *Registrar*

## THE FUNCTION OF A YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATE

The Standing Rules of the assembly establish that “advisory delegates are ... selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints” (*Manual of the General Assembly*, Standing Rule B.2.a).

Advisory delegates *advise* commissioners in a variety of ways throughout the assembly. The General Assembly recognizes that few young people are likely to be elected as commissioners. Therefore, the category of young adult advisory delegate was created in 1970 so that those voices could be heard. The General Assembly is open to having young people in its midst and encourages the voice of young adult advisory delegates in its deliberations.

The basic role and function of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is to make the assembly aware of issues and ideas they might not otherwise come to know.

This handbook is to help you to plan for the best ways to accomplish this important task. As part of preparing you for your time in Pittsburgh we will be offering webinars as the assembly approaches. A wide variety of topics will be covered including how to register, use PC-biz, and tips for arriving in Pittsburgh. As well, we’ll have a special YAADs only webinar at the beginning of June to answer questions you might have.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and is representative of the unity of synods, presbyteries, and sessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Until 2004, the General Assembly met annually. Now it meets biennially in even years, so this is only the fourth biennial assembly, and the second using the formula in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0501) that allows for more commissioners. There will be a total of 688 commissioners, with equal numbers of elders and ministers from each presbytery. There will also be 221 advisory delegates.

The General Assembly is the most inclusive council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is its court of final appeal. Decisions reached at a given assembly are final until another assembly changes them. That said, not all decisions made by the General Assembly are binding on all Presbyterians. For example, the assembly may choose to make a statement on an issue on behalf of the church, but these statements are not church law and so they do not bind individuals. However, the assembly does make laws for the church. Those laws, such as amendments to the *Book of Order*, are binding on all Presbyterians, members and elders alike.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY PARTICIPANTS

Many people participate in the various aspects of the General Assembly. There are a number of categories that help to sort and identify the different functions that people have. The following is a list and brief description of the major categories or groups of people you will encounter.

### **Commissioners**

Commissioners are ruling elders and teaching elders elected by their presbyteries. They may speak on the floor of the assembly, introduce motions, vote, and they have voice and vote in the assembly committees.

### **Advisory Delegates**

There are four categories of advisory delegates. These persons are given the right to speak in assembly meetings in order to present views that are not usually represented by the commissioners. They may not present motions or vote in meetings of the General Assembly, but they are polled before the commissioners vote on most items of business. They do have both voice and vote in the work of the assembly committees. There are four different types of advisory delegates and they include:

#### **Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD)**

These are persons who are members of the PC(USA), between the ages of 17 and 23. Each of the 173 presbyteries elects a young adult advisory delegate.

#### **Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSAD)**

These are persons who are enrolled and chosen from the ten PC(USA) theological institutions and from other institutions with a large population of PC(USA) students. There are twenty-five theological student advisory delegates.

#### **Missionary Advisory Delegates (MAD)**

These are individuals who serve as personnel (paid staff) serving areas where our church is engaged in mission work. There are eight missionary advisory delegates.

#### **Ecumenical Advisory Delegates (EAD)**

These are individuals appointed by the highest ecclesiastical authority of their denomination to represent them at the General Assembly. They are received by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. There are fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates.

### **Corresponding Members**

This category refers to key staff and elected members of the entities that report to the General Assembly, such as the General Assembly Mission Council and its program subdivisions, the Office of the General Assembly, other GA agencies, and several permanent and special committees. Former assembly Moderators, executives of the sixteen synods, and the presidents of the ten PC(USA) seminaries are also corresponding members. They may speak on matters related to the work of the body they represent, but they may not vote.

### **Assembly Assistants**

The Stated Clerk invites approximately fifty Presbyterians to come to the assembly and carry out various functions on a volunteer basis. They assist with assembly operations, serve on the Communication Center staff, help committees run smoothly, and carry out a variety of other tasks. The four YAAD advisors are assembly assistants.

### **Staff and Elected Members**

This group includes people who are employed by assembly agencies, and elders who are elected to the assembly level committees. They work as support staff and resource people at the assembly.

Most of the synods and presbyteries are represented at the assembly by one or more staff (in addition to their elected commissioners); some of the executives and stated clerks in these mid councils also assist the Office of the General Assembly in such roles as parliamentary assistants.

### **Guests/Observers**

Many individuals come to observe the assembly, but are not responsible for specific tasks of the General Assembly. Observers may attend committee meetings and plenary sessions, attend other public events, and may sign up to speak at open hearings of committees.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS MEETINGS

When the assembly comes together in plenary, all commissioners and advisory delegates have assigned seats. YAADs and TSADs are seated with the commissioners from their presbyteries for the Moderator's election. However, they will sit with the members of their committee for the plenary meetings that occur later in the week. All recommendations coming from the assembly committees to the business meeting must be acted on by the assembly. This can go very quickly for many noncontroversial items of business, or it can take many hours for controversial ones.

Advisory delegates do not vote, but they are polled before electronic votes, and the results are displayed on-screen, so this is another way (in addition to debate) to make your views known before the commissioners vote.

So that you have an idea of what sort of things come to the assembly, below are the committees and a description of them that are proposed for this assembly. Each assembly the committees are set up in response to the business the presbyteries send and you will be randomly assigned to one once we are closer to the start of the assembly.

### **Committees for the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2012) and their responsibilities**

- *Bills and Overtures*: Docket of the assembly and referrals of business to assembly committees after commencement of General Assembly (Standing Rules C.4. b.); appeal of persons denied the right to speak at a public hearing (Standing Rule E.5.b.); review requests for distribution of material to commissioners (Standing Rule E.6.c.); review requests from agencies to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings during assembly meeting (Standing Rule E.6.d.); recommend approval of time limits on debate (Standing Rule F.1.b.); review and recommend approval of General Assembly *Minutes* (Standing Rule F.1.c.); requests for presentations to the assembly (Standing Rule F.1.d.); review protests, determine if entered in the *Minutes*, prepare response if needed (Standing Rule F.1.e.); report on assembly committee requests for establishment of special committees or commissions (Standing Rule K.1.a.-b.).
- *GA Procedures*: Consider matters related to: meetings of the assembly; per capita budget; standing rule amendments; operation of the Office of the General Assembly; statistics; publishing of reports; General Assembly Nominating Committee process; special committees; commissioners and advisory delegates credentials/leaves of absence.

- *Review of Biennial Assemblies: Consider matters related to:* The report of the General Assembly Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies.
- *Mid Councils Issues: Consider matters related to:* mid council boundaries; mid council-related referrals; the report of the Mid Council Commission.
- *Church Polity: Consider matters related to:* amendments to Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (chapters 1 and 3), Form of Government Chapters I, III–IV, VI (except as covered by the Mid council Issues Committee) with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice. Advisory Committee on Litigation.
- *Church Orders and Ministry: Consider matters related to:* Amendments to Chapter II of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church. Advisory Committee on the Constitution.
- *A.I. Review: Consider matters related to:* The report of the General Assembly Task Force on the revision of the Form of Government.
- *Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations: Consider matters related to:* amendments to Chapter V of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; matters dealing with relationships with, and attitudes toward, other religious movements or bodies; conversations with other Presbyterian denominations; nominations for ecumenical advisory delegates; nominations for delegations to corresponding churches; reports of corresponding bodies.
- *Mission Coordination: Consider matters related to:* Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; *Organization for Mission* and General Assembly Mission Council *Manual of Operations*; mission budget; audits; church wide compensation.
- *Social Justice Issues: Consider matters related to:* Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations. General Assembly Committee on Representation. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.
- *Immigration Issues: Consider matters related to:* the church's response to US immigration policies and related issues.
- *Civil Union and Marriage Issues: Consider matters related to:* Amendments to the Form of Government, Rules of Discipline and Directory for Worship related to marriage and civil unions; referrals defining marriage.
- *Peacemaking and Intl. Affairs: Consider matters related to:* Peacemaking, international military affairs, and the arms race except matters touched upon by the Middle East

Peacemaking Issues Committee; international matters; human rights; plight of refugees worldwide; international economic justice; global evangelism and education.

- *Middle East Peacemaking Issues: Consider matters related to:* Peacemaking, international military affairs and the arms race primarily involving the nations of the Middle East; Middle East monitoring committee; MRTI recommendations concerning Middle East nations
- *Church Growth and PILP: Consider matters related to:* Items concerning evangelism, outreach, and church growth as they relate to congregations and councils of the church; ; church transfers, PILP.
- *Theological Issues and Institutions and C.E: Consider matters related to:* Amendments to the Directory for Worship and Chapter II of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; authority and interpretation of Scripture; Christian educators; theological institutions; celebration of Lord's Supper requests.
- *Confessions of the Church: Consider matters related to:* Amendments to the *Book of Confessions*. The report of the General Assembly Heidelberg Catechism Committee.
- *Review of GA Permanent Committees: Consider matters related to:* Review of the work of the General Assembly Permanent, Advocacy, and Advisory Committees as Scheduled [2012: ACC, ACL, COR, ACWC] (See *Organization for Mission*, Section IV.D.2.).
- *Board of Pensions, Foundation, and PPC: Consider matters related to:* Report of Board of Pensions; business related to the church's pension, annuity, and medical plans; other forms of such programs, including government or private retirement programs; business related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.
- *Health Issues: Consider matters related to:* Health, managed care, disabilities, abortion.

### THE YAAD GATHERING

Most evenings the YAADs and a few others will gather for a time of discernment, worship, and community building. The YAAD Gathering is a time for YAADs to worship together and return the work they've done to God. It is also a time for the YAADs to grow closer together and share their experience. It is a safe place where YAADs can freely express their joys, concerns, frustrations, or other thoughts without the pressure of the assembly. There will be opportunities for YAADs to participate in the gathering.

The first of these times together will be during your first day at the assembly. You'll spend the day getting to know one another and getting oriented to the assembly. Part of this day will be electing two of the YAADs to serve as the YAAD co-moderators. These two people will assist with various pieces of your time together.



The other times together will be “open meetings,” meaning that they are open to the public and that anyone can attend and observe. These people will be required to sit in an observer’s section and will not be allowed to participate in the gathering itself. Many of these observers are people who care deeply about the concerns you might have. Some are representatives from church entities or special interest groups who want to engage the YAADs in conversations about their particular area of ministry. Some of your times together will not be open to the public; elections or special events may be among these times when the meeting will be closed.

### PRACTICAL MATTERS

The bulk of this handbook has been concerned with how the assembly works and how advisory delegates participate in it. But, other logistical matters are also important and do have an impact upon how you experience your time at the assembly.

By accepting the election to be an advisory delegate to the assembly, you have made a commitment to spend a little over a week in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from June 28 to July 7, 2012, and you’ll need to take responsibility for making the arrangements for your travel and housing. This should only take a few minutes if you use the assistance the Office of the General Assembly provides. **You’ll receive more about registering and making arrangements when it’s closer to registration.**

Finally, we’ll be communicating with you as a YAAD through various ways. While the Office of the General Assembly will be sending you quite a bit of material via snail mail, we’ll also be sending you information through email, Facebook, and Twitter. If you have any questions, please contact **Tyler Gibson** in the OGA at **502-569-5111** or **tyler.gibson@pcusa.org**.

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