

July 2012

The Banner--Special GA Edition

Newsletter of the Presbytery of Arkansas



"Word from the 220th General Assembly"

Your Presbytery of Arkansas General Assembly commissioners, Young Adult Advisory Delegate and Theological Student Advisory Delegate have been active participants in the process that is General Assembly. At the 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA meeting in Pittsburgh this week, Breck Castleman is on the Immigration Issues Committee. Dick Freer is working with the Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee. Jesse Gonzalez serves on the Health Issues Committee. Claire Rhodes is serving as vice-moderator of the General Assembly Procedures Committee. Cameron Highsmith is a member of the Church Polity Committee and Ryan Smith's attention has been directed to the Peacemaking and International Issues Committee. Presbytery of Arkansas Stated Clerk, Cathy Ulrich, has been tabbed to assist with minutes of the Assembly's actions.



A new moderator, Neal D. Presa, pastor of Middlesex (N.J.) Presbyterian Church, was elected on the fourth ballot on Saturday evening. Dr. Presa is a Filipino-American pastor, husband and father of two young boys. He is a graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary and received a Ph.D. from Drew Theological Seminary. After the election and subsequent resignation of Vice-Moderator, Tara Spuhler McCabe, The Rev. Dr. Tom Trinidad, pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church of Colorado Springs, Colorado, was elected. Church governance, sexuality and peace issues have been at the top of the matters deliberated by the committees and recommendations are being presented to the full General Assembly in plenary sessions during the next days. How the church can best be structured to address the challenges of ministry in the 21st century with implications for synods, concerns about the Middle East and those who profit from "non-peaceful pursuits in Israel-Palestine", immigration and human sexuality, particularly as it relates to ordination standards and same-gender marriage, are

emerging as key issues for this assembly. The 688 commissioners, equally divided among teaching and ruling elders are being presented with approximately 800 items of business. Additionally, 221 advisory delegates, such as Cameron Highsmith and Ryan Smith, and thousands of visitors have gathered for the General Assembly. At this writing, the committees are beginning to present their recommendations to the entire General Assembly for consideration. Secular media resources will provide accounts of the actions of the General Assembly but these reports are often truncated and should be considered alongside the actual actions of the 220th General Assembly. Immediately following the Assembly, you will be provided a summary of the actions of the General Assembly which will assist you in understanding and interpreting the Assembly's actions.

Continue to keep those in Pittsburgh in your prayers that the Spirit will guide toward decisions which demonstrate a commitment to justice and mercy rooted in humility before God.

Grace always,

Bill Galbraith

PRESBYTERY STAFF:

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Stated Clerk [CATHY ULRICH](#)

Resourcing Director & Assistant Stated Clerk [NIANN THOMPSON](#)

Director of Mission Support [KENNETH RICH](#)

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Staff Resource for Youth [WHITNEY BORDELON](#)

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Treasurer [WES SHAVER](#)

Moderator of Presbytery [DAVID DYER](#)

Vice Moderator of Presbytery [SHEREE NIECE](#)

Moderator of the General Committee [SAM HIGHSMITH](#)



The Presbytery of Arkansas is a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which is part of the Reformed family of churches within the universal Church of Jesus Christ. Our vision is *to make visible the body of Christ* (Acts II).

We are composed of over 14,000 Presbyterians gathered in 87 active churches, two new church developments and two fellowships located in various towns and cities in the northern two-thirds of the State of Arkansas.

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