



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

June 15, 2022 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

What to expect out of this year's General Assembly Part I

Leslie Scanlon, PNS. The hybrid 2022 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – with in-person committee meetings and mostly online plenaries – is just around the corner, with the opening plenary set for June 18. With so much unrest in the world – the agony of the war and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the ever-morphing COVID-19 pandemic, political divisions playing out at school boards and state houses across the U.S. – it feels impossible to say what might take center stage at this assembly. To expect the unexpected might be the safest bet. The assembly will take up major recommendations regarding climate change and funding for the national church. But are some other issues on the agenda.

Ecumenical statements. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations is asking the assembly to receive and distribute to the church a study document on antisemitism and Islamophobia which builds on the “Interreligious Stance” approved by the 2014 General Assembly. *The fear felt by our Jewish and Muslim siblings in the face of unchecked antisemitism and Islamophobia in our time is real, and both have historical roots in Christianity,” the rationale for the study document states. “When Christians do not know the antisemitism and Islamophobia woven into our history, we are unable to come to our Jewish and Muslim siblings with repentance, and seek repair for this history.*

continued

This year's General Assembly, continued

These statements tie into a broader dispute involving statements made by Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson characterizing Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands as "21st-century slavery." His remarks incensed some Presbyterians and Jews, who called Nelson's statements antisemitic and said they have hurt Presbyterians' interfaith work in local communities. Other Presbyterians contend Nelson was right to call Israel to account for its treatment of Palestinians; an overture from Grace Presbytery asks the assembly to recognize that Israel's laws, policies, and practices regarding the Palestinian people fulfill the international legal definition of apartheid. Some commissioners may also want to raise the question of whether there are – or should be – stricter limits on the extent to which the stated clerk can speak for the PC(USA).

Racism. There will be a significant report from the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation, which was created by the 2016 General Assembly to "listen to the voices of those long silenced" regarding racism and oppression within the PC(USA). Their recommendations call for a new committee to "explore and expose where White supremacy institutionally and foundationally exists" in the PC(USA), and to examine the actions that previous assemblies have taken regarding racial equity, racism and White supremacy — to see whether and how those recommendations have actually been implemented, to identify the impediments that have gotten in the way, and to come up with strategies for overcoming that resistance. Other recommendations seek to have the PC(USA) apologize for its role in the nation's racist history. An overture from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy asks the assembly to offer an apology to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy, and to adopt a litany of repentance, while a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy will ask the assembly to create a task force on Reparative Justice and the PC(USA). In addition, a report will be presented from a task force examining disparities experienced by Black women and girls; a recommendation that Presbyterians work to hold federal and state authorities accountable for failing to seek justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls; and a recommendation that the Presbyterian Mission Agency work to bring attention to the disproportionately large number of black women and black infants who have died due to racial disparities in their healthcare.

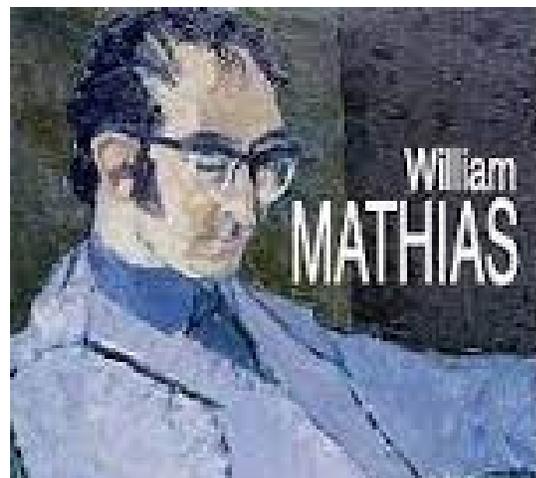
Gun violence. Another General Assembly committee will focus on violence in the United States, including issues of bullying, polarization and gun violence. An overture from the Synod of the Covenant asks the assembly to direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for universal background checks for firearms purchases, a ban on the sale and ownership of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines, and red-flag laws that would allow a court to remove weapons when a person shows signs of impending violence. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy wants the assembly to approve a 10-year campaign, the "Decade to End Gun Violence," from 2022 to 2032, "to be conducted at all levels of the church."

Equity. The LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force is recommending that the assembly create a new LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee as a permanent committee of the General Assembly. The task force found that equity issues continue to be a concern, both in the church and society.

next week: Part II

Music Notes.

This Sunday is Father's Day, and we shall honor fathers through music. In praise of our heavenly Father, the introit will be *Faith of our Fathers*, the opening hymn will be *This Is My Father's World* (Terra Beata) and the closing hymn will be Dear Lord and Father of Mankind (Rest). The anthem, *Glory to God in the Highest* by William Mathias (1934-1992), will be sung by Maximilian Daggy with his father, Roger, playing organ. And the prelude and postlude are by father/son composers Georg Muffat (1653-1704) and Gottlieb Muffat (1690-1770). **Happy Father's Day!**



Our Worship Channels

click on the logos



Liturgist this week: Joan Berry

Psalm 22:19-28

Luke 8:26-39

Sermon: Evil on the hoof.

HAPPY
FATHER'S
Day

"EVERYTHING tastes better when it's cooked on the grill."

This Week in History.



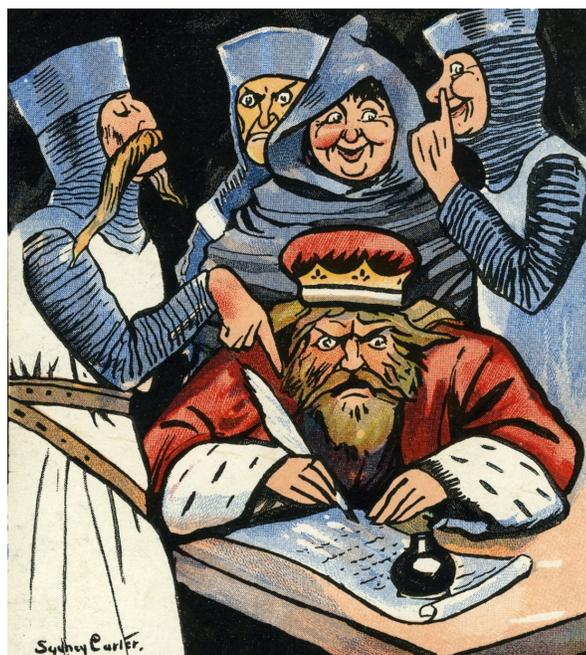
The New York Times begins publishing the *Pentagon Papers*, top secret documents exposing U.S. strategy in the Vietnam War.
June 13, 1971



John Adams introduced a resolution before Congress mandating a United States flag.
June 14, 1777



Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, 26., became the first woman in space., manually controlled the spacecraft through 48 orbits in 71 hours before landing safely.
June 16, 1963



King John set his seal to Magna Carta, the first charter of British liberties and the foundation of modern democracies around the world.
June 15, 1215



Five Republican Operatives were arrested for burglary of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.
June 17, 1972



French Forces under Napoleon are soundly defeated by Allied Dutch, Belgian and English troops under the command of General Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington.
June 18, 1815