

Lehigh Presbytery News

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June 10, 2016

222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



The General Assembly consists of commissioners elected by presbyteries. Half of the commissioners will be ruling elders, half will be teaching elders. Few will ever have been commissioners to the General Assembly before, but most will have served in one of the other governing bodies of our church: the session, which provides care and oversight of a local congregation; the presbytery, which provides care and oversight of a group of congregations; or the synod which provides care and oversight of several presbyteries.

It reviews the work of synods, resolves controversies in the church, is responsible for matters of common concern for the whole church, and serves as a symbol of unity for the church.

The General Assembly has several specific responsibilities outlined in Chapter 3 of the Book of Order. The assembly seeks to protect our church from errors in faith and practice, is responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions. The General Assembly presents a witness for truth and justice in our community and in the world community. It sets priorities for the church and establishes relationships with other churches or ecumenical bodies.

More information can be found at: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/>

2016 Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Candidates



Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson



Rev. David M. Baker

A major item of business before the [222nd General Assembly \(2016\)](#) is the election of a Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. [The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee](#), elected by the 221st General Assembly (2014), has been diligent in its work and has been careful to follow the process detailed in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly found in the Manual of the General Assembly.

At the conclusion of the final interviews, the committee selected the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to recommend to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for election as the next Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

As provided for in the Standing Rules, one additional applicant declared to the committee on May 4, 2016, his intention to stand against the committee's nominee. He is the Reverend David M. Baker. With this communication is a packet of information containing material for both J. Herbert Nelson and David

Baker: biographical information, a personal statement, and answers to questions posed by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Information for the committee's nominee is presented first.



Technology expands the congregation for opening worship of GA222

The church, world are invited to stream in

Eva Stimson, Correspondent, Office of the General Assembly

Several thousand people are expected to gather in Portland, Oregon, on Saturday, June 18, for the opening worship service of the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is encouraging congregations and mid councils to gather groups in their locations to [worship with the assembly via live stream](#).

The goal is to help more Presbyterians “feels a part of the assembly, rather than feeling like the assembly is apart from them,” says Tom Hay, director for assembly operations in the Office of the General Assembly.

The assembly's opening worship service begins at 11 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time and is scheduled to last about ninety minutes. It will include communion, the commissioning of assembly commissioners and advisory delegates, a sermon by outgoing Moderator Heath Rada, and music by a mass choir, a bell choir, and a contemporary band.

The liturgy for the service—including the words and music of hymns—is [available online for download](#) by groups planning to worship in other locations. Congregations joining the service by live stream may want to plan how to participate in the Lord's Supper as well.

“We always try to root the work of the assembly in worship and prayer,” Hay says. Enabling more Presbyterians to participate in opening worship “will help the rest of the church to root their experience of the assembly in worship as well.”

“Over and over I am hearing our members say they are tired of disagreeing, they are ready to become the Body of Christ in ways that are harmonious, and to be unified through Christ,” says Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014). “The opening worship service provides the opportunity for us to witness to others that in spite of our differences, we do not disagree when it comes to gathering around the communion table and worshipping our God.”

(To read the whole article on-line visit: <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2016/5/24/technology-expands-congregation-opening-worship-ga/>)

222nd General Assembly bulletin inserts ***help you share news with your congregation***

The Presbytery has purchased the use of the bulletin inserts for our churches from the Presbyterian Outlook. The pre-GA bulletin inserts were sent to each church in both regular and large print by mail or email. You may make as many copies as you need.

We will be sending the post-GA bulletin insert the Monday after General Assembly ends to share with your members. If you should have any questions, need any additional information, or have not received the insert from us, please contact the Presbytery office.

Call for the June Stated Meeting of Lehigh Presbytery



The June Stated Meeting of the Lehigh Presbytery is called for **Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.** at the **Pennside Presbyterian Church, 253 N. 25th Street, Reading, PA.**

All teaching and ruling elder commissioners are asked to **register through the Presbytery office by Tuesday, June 21, 2016.** Please let us know whether you will be staying for dinner. The dinner cost is \$8.00 per person.

Our featured speaker at this meeting is **Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley**, Ministry Relations Office of the Presbyterian Foundation, who **will provide tips and techniques for Stewardship Education.**

The commissioners can find the documents for the meeting on-line at

<http://lehighpresbytery.org/news-events/meetings-minutes/stated-meeting-documents/>



Transformation of Congregational Stewardship

In today's environment, the need to look at stewardship differently is not only important – it's necessary.

The Lehigh Presbytery is sponsoring an opportunity for our church leadership to learn how to transform your stewardship program to become a vital part of the life of your church, resulting in a unique and surprising gift.

This workshop will focus on the foundational issues of spirituality and leadership, providing immediately do-able steps for growing generosity and transforming congregations. This workshop will equip leaders to shift their congregants' hearts as well as their wallets.

So join us at the Presbytery meeting on June 28, 2016 where the Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley from the Presbyterian Foundation will share this information and be able to answer your questions.

New Live Simply Resources are Available Now

Live Simply, based on Philippians 4:11, is the theme for resources published by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center. Use [Giving magazine volume 18](#), Live Simply [theme materials](#), and the digital [Companion Resource](#) to create your congregational stewardship emphasis. [More](#)

<https://stewardshipresources.org/resources>



Summer Camp – Registration is underway

We offer week-long overnight and day-camps designed to nurture Christ-centered community based on trust, love, and a challenge to personal growth. Campers will meet new friends, play crazy games, and have an unforgettable week.



Open to rising grades 1-12. Visit our website at <http://www.kirkwoodcamp.org/camp.html> to learn about the different camps offered and to register. You can register on-line or by requesting a registration form from the camp.

Don't delay.....sign up today!

Kirkwood Camp, 127 Kirkwood Road, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
Phone: 570-421-8625 - Email: Kirkwood@kirkwoodcamp.org

YARD SALE

The Zion United Presbyterian Church will be holding a yard sale

July 8 & 9, 2016

Come browse the tables and pick up some wonderful treasures.



Zion Presbyterian Church, Water Street, Wind Gap, PA 18091



Making Peace with the Earth

The greatest untapped natural resource for addressing the world's most pressing problems comes from the energy of religiously committed people. This book gathers the expertise of activists, theologians, and faith-based organizations to inspire and encourage churches everywhere in grassroots work and advocacy for climate justice. No issue so violates the core of Christian convictions as the jeopardizing of human life and creation through climate change. The book points out that making peace with the earth will not be easy, but now is the time for religious leaders, church people, and organizations to make the climate their priority.

http://www.amazon.com/Making-Peace-Earth-Advocacy-Climate/dp/2825416681/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/making-peace-with-the-earth-action-advocacy-for-climate-justice>

Rev. Grace Ji-Sun Kim is associate professor of theology at Earlham School of Religion, a member of Lehigh Presbytery, and a regular blogger on "The Huffington Post." Her other books include "The Grace of Sophia: A Korean North American Women's Christology" and "The Holy Spirit, Chi, and the Other: A Model of Global and Intercultural Pneumatology."

Important Federal Court Ruling on Failure to Report Child Abuse

Published in *Church Law & Tax Report, January/February 2016, pg. 12, Senior Editor Richard R. Hammar, Christianity Today, publisher.*

A federal court in Pennsylvania ruled that a local church and denominational agency could be sued on the basis of the legal principle of *negligence per se* by a victim of child abuse as a result of their failure to report. This means that a mandatory child abuse reporter's failure to comply with a state child abuse reporting law's requirement to report a known or reasonably suspected incident of child abuse would render that person automatically liable for monetary damages without a need for the victim to prove actual negligence. [*Doe v. Liberatore, 478 F.Supp.2d 742 (M.D. pa 2007)*]

Revised Overtime Rules

Under a new Department of Labor (DOL) rule announced by the White House on May 18, 2016, updated regulations on overtime pay will go into effect on December 1, 2016.

If an employee is exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"), their employer is not required to pay overtime compensation of one and a half times their regular pay. Currently, to qualify for the white collar exemption to overtime pay, the employee must meet certain tests regarding their executive, administrative or professional job duties and must be paid on a salary basis of not less than \$455 per week, or \$23,660 per year.

The new regulations raise the salary threshold to \$913 per week, or \$47,476 annually. This more than doubles the current salary threshold and is estimated to extend overtime pay to an additional 4.2 million workers in the United States.

What this means is that an employee who previously met the criteria for an exemption, but whose salary falls below the new threshold of \$913 per week must be paid overtime at one and one-half the regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 per work week. For example, an office worker performing bona fide administrative duties who is paid an annual salary of \$30,000 is not entitled to overtime pay under the current structure, but will be eligible under the new regulations. The worker must record his or her time work to receive pay for one and a half times their hourly rate for work in excess of 40 hours per week. Note that there is no provision for compensatory ("comp") time in lieu of overtime pay under federal law.

The applicability of these provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Acts ("FSLA") to religious organizations is not entirely clear. While church legal authorities generally advise that the FLSA applies to churches, there is authority from the DOL that lists clergy and religious workers as one of six categories of occupations exempt from the FLSA's overtime provisions. It is anticipated that further guidance will be provided by the time the updated regulations go into effect.

Churches and other religious organizations may wish to consult with their legal and/or financial advisors to discuss the potential impact of the new overtime regulations on their ministry operations and budget effective December 1, 2016.

For additional information, check out these links:

- [Overtime Final Rule and the Non-Profit Sector](#)
- [Guidance for Non-Profit Organizations on Paying Overtime under the FLSA](#)

(article taken from GuideOne Insurance – Safety Watch newsletter)



International Peacemakers
Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

PEACEMAKERS ARE AVAILABLE FROM SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 17, 2016

Plan now to host an international peacemaker this fall. These distinguished partners come from around the world to visit out mid-councils between September 23-October 17.

A list of peacemakers will soon be available on the peacemaking website and applications will be accepted until July 31, 2016 or until all spaces are filled.

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program covers the cost of all international and domestic air travel. Hosting entities provide housing, meals, local transportation and contribute a \$450 fee to the International Peacemakers Program. For complete details and an application to host an International Peacemaker, visit <http://pcusa.org/peacemaking>



Despite all the Facebook photos of May snowfalls in the Rockies and freezing nights in the Adirondacks, SUMMER IS COMING! It happens every year just when we think we can't possibly shovel another inch of snow.

Did you know that summer is a great time for new worshipping communities?

People who have been hibernating all winter venture out onto their porches and patios. They head to the city parks and ball fields. Neighbors gather for back yard barbecues. People flock to basketball courts and food trucks. It is a great time to reconnect with neighbors.



Perhaps your congregation would like to plan a fun fellowship event where you get to know your own community better. Pages 25-29 of *Starting New Worshipping Communities* will show you how.

The resource is also available in [Spanish](#) and [Korean](#).



THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION FUND
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Thank you for your ongoing support of our Presbyterian seminaries through the Theological Education Fund.

Effective January 1, 2015, the TEF offices were transferred (per action of the 221st General Assembly: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/4725>) to the Presbyterian Foundation.

Please note the following way to give to the TEF (which should **replace** any previous information or account numbers):

Ways to Give *NEW INFORMATION* for churches:

Please send your contribution with checks and paperwork clearly marked:

Theological Education Fund (#1020203030)

through the regular channel used by your church (typically your presbytery or synod office) when sending funds for General Assembly causes.



Colloquy for Mid-Career Clergy 2016-17 Accepting Applications up to June 15, 2016

Aug 15-17, 2016 and January 23-25, 2017 are the dates for the second Colloquy for Mid-Career Clergy, part of the Pastoral Excellence Program of the Center for Lifelong Learning.

The Colloquy designed for mid-career clergy (ten to twenty years into full time ministry) who are seeking to participate in a professional formative conversation or to reflect on their vocational experience, and assess their ability to meet the leadership demands/needs of their organization. This event is by application only. For additional information, including the link to the application, visit <http://www.ctsnet.edu/colloquy-for-mid-career-clergy>.

2016 Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study

The 120 year old *Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* has transformed to a new digital-only resource. By offering this as a free resource through our website, we are able to broaden its reach, share inspiring content in a timelier manner, and demonstrate better stewardship.

Click the link to read the daily Mission Yearbook article.



Upcoming Speakers at the 2016 Meetings at Lehigh Presbytery

As Lehigh Presbytery looks at creating an atmosphere for cultivating leadership skills among Pastors, Elders, and Congregational Leaders we are pleased to present these educational opportunities. Plan now to join us. (All are welcome to attend.)

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| June 28, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. | Stated Meeting of Lehigh Presbytery at the Pennside Presbyterian Church, 253 N. 25 th Street, Reading, PA.
Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley , Ministry Relations Office of the Presbyterian Foundation <i>will provide tips and techniques for Stewardship Education.</i> |
| Sept. 27, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. | Stated Meeting of Lehigh Presbytery at the College Hill Presbyterian Church, 501 Brodhead Street, Easton, PA.
Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace , Executive Presbyter of Philadelphia Presbytery will speak on <i>"Engaging in the Wilderness of Mid-Council Wanderings –the challenges, temptations, and opportunities of the journey and a new land."</i> |
| Nov. 15, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. | Stated Meeting of Lehigh Presbytery at the Community Presbyterian Church, 1755 S. Delaware Drive, Mt. Bethel, PA.
Worship Celebration and Speaker for Princeton Theological Seminary. |

PLEASE NOTE:

The phones at the Presbytery office will be answered on the following days and hours:

- Mondays-Wednesday – 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Thursday-Friday – 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

If you call during the hours the phones are not being answered, please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible. Thank you.