



## Winnebago Presbytery

June 25, 2014

TO: Minister Members, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Clerks of Session

Greetings in the name of Christ,

As you well know, last week in Detroit was a big week for Presbyterians everywhere and many, many decisions were made that affect our life and work together. You've no doubt seen press releases, letters, commentaries, blog posts and perhaps you've even fielded phone calls from people with questions.

The General Assembly deliberated on more than 150 items of business that came to them through 15 separate committees. Several items were controversial - more on those below. Some items were difficult and sad - the Mid Council committee recommended that one of our non-geographic presbyteries, Midwest Hanmi, cease to be a presbytery. And some items were joyous celebrations - the Congregational Vitality committee brought an update on the 1001 new worshipping communities initiative. Over 200 communities have formed and more are in the making!

Over the coming weeks and months there will be opportunities to here about the decisions made and in some cases, presbyteries will be deciding whether to concur with the assembly's actions. Here are some ways that you can share the work of the assembly with your congregation.

\* The presbytery has purchased the Presbyterian Outlook summary bulletin insert and is making it available to all of our congregations. You should have received notice of this yesterday. Click [here](#) to download the document.

\* For congregants who might want to see the specific language of any of the business items, PC-BIZ is always available and can be viewed with out a log-in or password. pc-biz.org is found here: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga221/>. Click on the Committee tab for a list of business items.

On two of the most controversial issues, the office of Mid Council Relations has prepared two FAQs to help presbytery leaders, pastors and sessions interpret the work of the assembly to congregations.

\* Information about the definition of marriage and the ability of teaching elders to officiate at LGBTQ ceremonies can be found [here](#) and

\* Information about the action to divest from 3 corporations who are engaged in "non peaceful pursuits" in the conflict between Israel and Palestine can be found [here](#).

It will take some time for pastors, sessions and congregations to digest all the information coming out of this assembly. However, there are a few key things we'd like you to know.

The first is that your staff and officers wish to be available as resource to you as you learn what actions the assembly took and how they may impact your congregation. Please be in touch with us if you have questions or want further information about assembly decisions. If we don't have the answer, we'll find out.

Second, know that various media outlets are reporting without all of the details or in some cases with misinformation. The PC(USA) news site is the most accurate place to go for full coverage [www.pcusa.org/news](http://www.pcusa.org/news).

The theme of the assembly was Abound in Hope and as I reflect on the week, I find myself grateful to be part of a denomination in which decisions are made by many voices rather than just a few. It's a messy process, no doubt, but something about it feels very faithful to me. Even if I disagree with an outcome, I know that good people of faith have wrestled and argued, and studied and listened and prayed and wrestled some more. No decision is made lightly. And through it all - tough decisions, messy discernment and joyous celebrations - we know that God is with us, calling us to abound in hope.

Gratefully,

*Sarah*

Sarah Moore-Nokes

General Presbyter