

A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLES

...For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7).

The theme of our 215th General Assembly, set to convene in Denver at the end of May, is “A House of Prayer for all Peoples.” This wonderful vision of the prophet Isaiah was his challenge to the children of Israel when they returned to Israel following the exile and began to re-establish their faith community. He reminded them that there are no limits to those whom God wishes to include in God’s people and in God’s plan of salvation.

This is also an important challenge to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as we move toward this year’s assembly. God’s love knows no limits. We are called to be the kind of people who eagerly welcome and share that love with all people. While this assembly will face many important issues related to our life together as Presbyterians, I hope and pray that this assembly will be remembered as one in which Presbyterians turned not in upon themselves, but outward to the world and the people whom God loves.

This assembly presents important opportunities to make just such a witness through:

- responding to a variety of calls to be peacemakers in a world of violence and conflict;
- enthusiastically adopting new mission strategies to share the gospel among Hispanics and those involved in higher education;
- reaffirming our commitment to the World Council of Churches as a major instrument to promote the unity of the church and of humankind;
- strengthening our witness and solidarity with the people and churches of Africa;
- reaching out to families—traditional and otherwise—to make Jesus Christ the center of family life.

Maybe even more important than the issues will be the opportunity to come together as Presbyterians from different regions, genders, ethnic backgrounds, and theological perspectives to live out our unity in Christ and our commitment to be God’s people in the world. Our *Book of Order* makes an important claim that “the Church of Jesus Christ is a provisional demonstration of what God intends for all humanity” (G-3.0200). May such a bold claim become a living reality as we gather together in Denver.

Please join me in praying for our General Assembly, that its witness and life together may indeed proclaim to the world that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is “called to be a house of prayer for all peoples.”

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