Grace and peace to you!

Congratulations on your election as a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) to the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Your participation in the life of the PC(USA) in general and as a YAAD in particular is highly valued. I look forward to meeting you in Detroit.

As the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, I have the overall responsibility for the arrangements for the General Assembly meeting. Staff of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), assisted by volunteers from across the church, are involved in planning for the upcoming activities in Detroit. Our primary goal in all these arrangements is to enable commissioners and advisory delegates to carry out their responsibilities in the highest council of the PC(USA).

This handbook is one of the resources we have developed to help you understand your role as a YAAD and assist you as you prepare for the assembly. We hope it will provide some practical information about preparations, as well as more substantive material about the General Assembly and what you can expect during your week in Detroit.

OGA staff are ready to assist you with any questions throughout your preparation for service as a YAAD. You can contact them at Andrew.Yeager-Buckley@pcusa.org or 888-728-7228, ext. 5419.

In addition, I have appointed four volunteer assembly assistants will be in Detroit to help coordinate special activities for YAADs and provide any additional assistance on-site. You’ll get to know them much better in June.

This gathering holds the promise of being an exciting and important event in the life of our church. I pray that it holds true for your own life as well. May God’s blessings be with you as you prepare for your important service.

Sincerely,

Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
What is the General Assembly?

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and is representative of the unity of synods, presbyteries, and sessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The General Assembly meets every two years. There will be a total of 688 commissioners, with equal numbers of elders and ministers from each presbytery. There will also be 221 advisory delegates.

The General Assembly is the most inclusive council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is its court of final appeal. Decisions reached at a given assembly are final until another assembly changes them.

What is a YAAD?

The Standing Rules of the assembly establish that “advisory delegates are … selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints” (Manual of the General Assembly, Standing Rule B.2.a).

Advisory delegates advise commissioners in a variety of ways throughout the assembly. The General Assembly recognizes that few young people are likely to be elected as commissioners. Therefore, the category of young adult advisory delegate was created in 1970 so that those voices could be heard. The General Assembly is open to having young people in its midst and encourages the voice of young adult advisory delegates in its deliberations.

The basic role and function of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is to make the assembly aware of issues and ideas they might not otherwise come to know.

How does the General Assembly work?

The People You’ll Meet

Many people participate in the various aspects of the General Assembly. There are a number of categories that help to sort and identify the different functions that people have. The following is a list and brief description of the major categories or groups of people you will encounter.

Commissioners
Commissioners are ruling elders and teaching elders elected by their presbyteries. They may speak on the floor of the assembly, introduce motions, vote, and they have voice and vote in the assembly committees.
Advisory Delegates
There are four categories of advisory delegates. These persons are given the right to speak in assembly meetings in order to present views that are not usually represented by the commissioners. They may not present motions or vote in meetings of the General Assembly, but they are polled before the commissioners vote on most items of business. They do have both voice and vote in the work of the assembly committees. There are four different types of advisory delegates and they include:

- **Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD)**
  These are persons who are members of the PC(USA), between the ages of 17 and 23. Each of the 173 presbyteries elects a young adult advisory delegate.

- **Theological Student Advisory Delegates (TSAD)**
  These are persons who are enrolled and chosen from the ten PC(USA) theological institutions and from other institutions with a large population of PC(USA) students. There are twenty-five theological student advisory delegates.

- **Missionary Advisory Delegates (MAD)**
  These are individuals who serve as personnel (paid staff) serving areas where our church is engaged in mission work. There are eight missionary advisory delegates.

- **Ecumenical Advisory Delegates (EAD)**
  These are individuals appointed by the highest ecclesiastical authority of their denomination to represent them at the General Assembly. They are received by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. There are fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates.

Corresponding Members
This category refers to key staff and elected members of the entities that report to the General Assembly, such as the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, other GA agencies, and several permanent and special committees. Former assembly Moderators, executives of the sixteen synods, and the presidents of the ten PC(USA) seminaries are also corresponding members. They may speak on matters related to the work of the body they represent, but they may not vote.

Assembly Assistants
The Stated Clerk invites approximately fifty Presbyterians to come to the assembly and carry out various functions on a volunteer basis. They assist with assembly operations, serve on the Communication Center staff, help committees run smoothly, and carry out a variety of other tasks. The four YAAD advisors are assembly assistants.

Staff and Elected Members
This group includes people who are employed by assembly agencies, and elders who are elected to the assembly level committees. They work as support staff and resource people at the assembly. Most of the synods and presbyteries are represented at the assembly by one or more staff (in addition to their elected commissioners); some of the executives and stated clerks in these mid councils also assist the Office of the General Assembly in such roles as parliamentary assistants.

Guests/Observers
Many individuals come to observe the assembly, but are not responsible for specific tasks of the General Assembly. Observers may attend committee meetings and plenary sessions, attend other public events, and may sign up to speak at open hearings of committees.
The Process

The General Assembly acts on hundreds of pieces of business brought to it by presbyteries, synods, committees, agencies, and even commissioners themselves. Each item of business is assigned to a committee. The General Assembly, in its plenary meetings, makes its decisions by voting on the recommendation of its committees. All of the assembly’s business is available on PC-BIZ (pc-biz.org).

Committees

Much of the first half of your General Assembly experience will take place in the committee to which you have been randomly assigned. Each committee makes recommendations on business that relates to a particular topic. Advisory delegates enjoy the privilege of full voice and vote on committees. The committees for the 221st General Assembly (2014) are:

- Bills and Overtures (02) – organizes and monitors the work of the General Assembly
- General Assembly Procedures (03)
- Middle East Issues (04)
- Mid Councils Issues (05) – issues related to presbyteries and synods
- Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) – issues relating to the governance of the church
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (07)
- Mission Coordination (08) – issues relating to the church’s mission structure and budget
- Social Justice Issues (09)
- Civil Union and Marriage Issues (10)
- Peacemaking and International Issues (11)
- BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation (12) – reviews the work of four of the GA agencies
- Theological Institutions and Issues and Christian Education (13)
- Congregational Vitality (14)
- Immigration and Environmental Issues (15)

Plenary

The General Assembly meets in its entirety in plenary meetings. When the assembly comes together in plenary, all commissioners and advisory delegates have assigned seats. YAADs and TSADs are seated with the commissioners from their presbyteries. All recommendations coming from the assembly committees to the business meeting must be acted on by the assembly.

Advisory delegates do not vote, but have voice on the floor of the assembly. They also have an advisory vote, which is taken immediately before commissioners vote. Votes in plenary are often recorded electronically.

Being Presbyterian

Presbyterians believe that the mind of Christ is best discerned in community. The General Assembly experience is steeped in worship, prayer, and fellowship. Many have described the General Assembly as a family reunion, where people from across the church gather. Everyone at General Assembly has a better experience when it is marked by meeting people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Participating in the General Assembly as a commissioner or advisory delegate is, for most, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.
Life as a YAAD

Arrival and Registration
Most YAADs will be arriving in Detroit on Thursday, June 12. The Committee on Local Arrangements will provide transportation from the airport to the Detroit Mariott at the Renaissance Center, where YAADs, and most commissioners, will be housed. After checking in to the hotel, YAADs should plan to register on the 3rd floor of the Mariott, outside the Ontario Exhibit Hall beginning at 5:00 P.M. Boxed dinners will be provided.

Orientation
YAADs will spend Friday, June 13 together in a day-long orientation. The day begins with breakfast at 8:00 A.M. in the Ontario Exhibit Hall of the Marriott. We will eat meals as a group. YAADs will come away from the day with a greater understanding of what the week ahead will bring. Time for community building and worship will be built in through the day.

YAAD Advisors
The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly has appointed four assembly assistants to serve as YAAD advisors who offer support and guidance to young adult advisory delegates in Detroit.

Rev. Kevin Hay is a campus minister living in Wilmington, North Carolina. Kevin is a graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary. Prior to seminary, Kevin attended Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and had a short career in banking for a few years in Birmingham, Alabama. Kevin is a “PK,” coming from a family of many Presbyterian ministers. Kevin has a “look-alike” older brother—Robert Hay Jr.—who will also be helping at General Assembly as one of the “blue-apron guys.” When Kevin isn’t spending time with college students or hanging out on the beach, he enjoys live music, movies, and sports.

Kevin will be serving the YAADs on these committees:
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (07)
- Mission Coordination (08)
- Congregational Vitality (14)
- Immigration and Environmental Issues (15)

Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks is the mother of two children, Natalily (13), Isaiah (10), and wife of Justin. She lives in Salt Lake City, Utah where she serves Wasatch Presbyterian Church working with Youth Ministry and the Emergent Worship service. Amy Kim grew up in Salt Lake City and has a fervent desire to find common ground among the LDS community and create bridges for better understanding and respect. Amy Kim is passionate about the work of the PCUSA having served the church nationally in a variety of capacities since she was an adolescent. She was a YAAD in 1996 (yes she is old) she believes church cannot survive without the contribution of young people in our churches.

Amy Kim will be serving the YAADs on these committees:
- Mid Council Issues (05)
- Civil Unions and Marriage (10)
- BOP, PILP, PPC (12)
Keishla Lanzot Rivera is a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is a member of the Presbyterian Church in Hato Rey. She has worked with the youth group since the age of 15. Keishla has extensive experience in the youth ministries of her synod and presbytery, and was part of the production team for the 2013 Presbyterian Youth Triennium. She served as a YAAD to the 219th General Assembly (2010) and was an interpreter for the 220th GA (2012). Keishla was ordained as a ruling elder two years ago and loves serving the church, especially in youth ministry.

Keishla will be serving the YAADs on these committees:
- Bills and Overtures (02)
- Church Polity (06)
- Social Justice (09)
- Theological Issues (13)

Jeff Moles is a ruling elder from Nashville, Tennessee. Jeff works for Room In The Inn, a non-profit organization that provides a place of belonging, recovery, and growth for people experiencing homelessness. He also serves as the music director at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Nashville. Jeff served as a YAD to the 212th General Assembly (2000), and served as a PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer in Nashville in 2006-07. He has regularly led worship at events for the YAV program since his year of service.

Jeff will be serving the YAADs on these committees:
- GA Procedures (03)
- Middle East Issues (04)
- Peacemaking and International Issues (11)

In addition, staff from the Office of the General Assembly are offering support to the YAAD program. These persons include Andrew Yeager-Buckley and Kari Hay.

Each of the four YAAD advisors will lead a home group. Your home group leader will serve as your primary contact person should an issue arise during the week. Your advisor will be checking in with you through the week, sitting in on your committee meetings, and leading your group in reflection as part of the YAAD evening gatherings. You will be assigned to a home group based on the assembly committee of which you will be a member.

**YAAD Council and Co-Moderators**

During the orientation day, YAADs will elect two representatives (1 male, 1 female) from each of the four home groups to serve on the YAAD Council. Members of the YAAD Council will take leadership roles in partnership with the YAAD advisors through the week. Members of the YAAD Council will also be candidates for YAAD co-moderator. One female and one male will be elected as YAAD Co-Moderators the evening of Friday, June 13. These co-moderators will serve as the leaders of the evening YAAD gathering, with support from the YAAD advisors.

**YAAD Gatherings**

YAADs will gather in the evening after the conclusion of assembly business. Time will be spent as the large group for worship and important information, and then we will split into home groups for a time of reflection and sharing.
10 Important Things to Do Between Now and GA

1. Log on to PC-BIZ.org and familiarize yourself with the business before the assembly. Pay close attention to all of the business that has been referred to your committee.

2. Do some research about the city of Detroit. Be ready to look for places where hope abounds there.

3. Spend some time reflecting on the scriptural theme for the 221st General Assembly: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

4. Connect with #GA22.
   
   YAAD Page: facebook.com/yaads221
   Main GA Page: facebook.com/SpiritOfGA
   YAADs-only Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/yaads221

   @yaads221
   #ga221 #pcusa

   Download the 221st General Assembly mobile app. Visit pcusa.org/ga221mobile to download the Guidebook app to your iPhone or Android device.

5. Get some sleep. You may not get as much as you’re used to during GA.

6. Think about what you’ll need to bring. Be sure this includes a credit card, some extra cash for things like hotel tips, all of your insurance information, and comfortable shoes.

7. Get to know the other commissioners from your presbytery.

8. Prepare for a rewarding experience. But also know that General Assembly is difficult. It is not anything like attending a youth conference or retreat. GA is several days of intense debate, discernment, and work.

9. Read all the logistical information sent to you by the Office of the General Assembly.

10. Pray for the guidance of the Spirit. GA is a big job.