



NAP News

August 2024



Do you have news you'd like to have included? Send submissions to adminoffice@napcusa.org by the 25th of each month.

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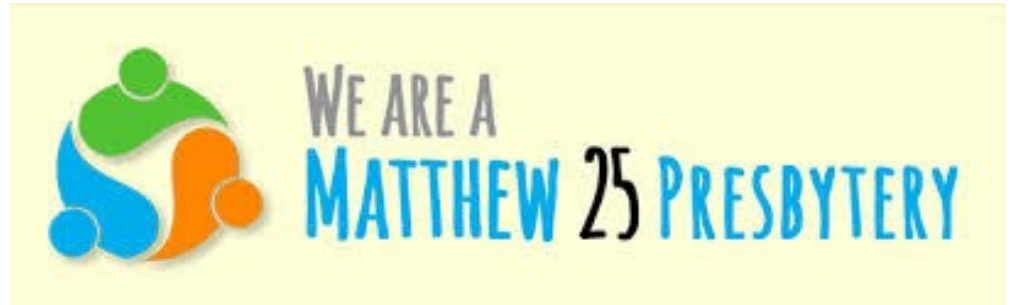
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Beloved Community,

As summer graces us with its warmth and long, sunlit days, we find ourselves in a season of relaxation and rejuvenation. This is a precious time to refresh our spirits and reflect on the vibrant journey we share as a faith community.

In this season of renewal, we are reminded of the three foundational pillars of the Matthew 25 initiative: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. Just as summer invites us to pause and rejuvenate, these pillars call us to invigorate our commitment to justice, compassion, and transformative action.

Building Congregational Vitality: Summer offers us a unique opportunity to gather in fellowship, deepening our relationships and strengthening our communal bonds. Whether through outdoor worship services, community picnics, or mission projects, let's embrace this time to energize our congregations and foster vibrant, thriving faith communities.

Dismantling Structural Racism: As we bask in the summer sun, let us also shine a light on the injustices that persist in our society. This season, we are called to educate ourselves, engage in courageous conversations, and take meaningful steps toward dismantling the structures of racism that divide us. Together, we can cultivate a more just and inclusive world.

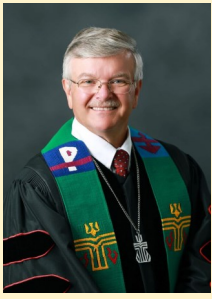
Eradicating Systemic Poverty: The abundance of summer reminds us of the pressing need to address the inequalities that leave so many without basic necessities. Let us use this time to amplify our efforts to combat poverty, support those in need, and advocate for policies that promote economic justice for all.

As we enjoy the gifts of summer, may we be inspired to renew our commitment to the transformative mission of Matthew 25. Let this season of relaxation and rejuvenation also be a time of reflection and action, propelling us forward in our journey of faith and service.

Rev. Dr. Dianne Moffett

*Executive Director/President
PC(USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency*





From our Executive Presbyter, Dr. Tom Lovell...

Dear Partners in Ministry,

By the time this edition of our Presbytery’s newsletter reaches your inbox, athletes from across the globe will be gathering in Paris for the 2024 summer Olympic games. The most elite athletes will be vying for bronze, silver, or gold medals while others will be relishing this incredible opportunity to represent their country and compete with the best of the best. As the games begin, tens of thousands of fans from around the world will gather along the Seine River to watch the opening ceremonies and welcome the athletes. Event venues throughout Paris will be filled with cheering spectators offering encouragement to the athletes as they compete for a place on the podium. And while the Olympic games provide a showcase for the world’s best athletes, they also provide us with an example of what life in our diverse world could be like. The Olympic games are a gathering of perhaps the most diverse collection of people that has ever been assembled. Athletes from 206 countries, representing most every ethnicity, language, culture, and religion in the world, will descend upon Paris not only to showcase their athletic abilities, but also to display a profound sense of sportsmanship, respect, and camaraderie, even in the midst of heated competition. There will be stories of what we might call the “thrill of victory and the agony of defeat,” as well as stories of how athletes from countries who often struggle with diplomatic relationships develop friendships which result in mutual support, encouragement, and respect for one another, even in spite of their differences. What a wonderful lesson that would be for us to learn!

I am writing this less than one week after the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump; a horrific event which took the life of an innocent bystander, seriously injured others and shocked our nation. While we may never know the motive of the would-be-assassin, his actions highlighted the reality of the depth of the division and hostility that has been running rampant in our society over the last several years. It is a reality, as leaders of both major political parties agree, must change, and I hope and pray that it will.

We live in a diverse society which has unfortunately allowed our diversity to divide us, but it doesn’t have to be that way. If international athletes can put their heart and soul into heated competition and at the same time offer support, encouragement and show respect to their competitors, certainly we can find a way to listen to and respect the views of those who differ from us without resorting to divisive, hateful, and inciteful words and actions. I have no doubt that the temperature of our nation’s political discourse will continue to rise in the coming weeks and months. But as it does, let us follow the example of our Olympic athletes and find a way to show respect for those who disagree with us, that as the people of the church, we may provide an example for the world to follow. As the hymn proclaims, “Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.”

**Grace & Peace,
Tom**

Dr. Lovell’s Schedule

- August 4—First, Cullman
- August 13—First Cullman, Session
- August 27—Westminster, Decatur Session

NAP Transitions

The past few months have provided many transitions in leadership for North Alabama Presbytery.



We welcomed
Rev. Susan Parker as
Temporary Pastor
at Westminster,
Florence.



We welcomed
Rev. Robin Lambert as
Temporary Pastor
at First, Cullman.



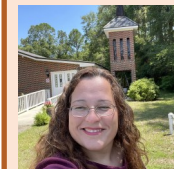
**We celebrated and
transitioned**
Rev. David Palmer
from Stated Supply at
First, Cullman to
Member-at-Large.



**We celebrated and
bid farewell to**
Rev. Brett Gudeman
who concluded his
ministry at First,
Huntsville to serve as the pastor of
Eagle River PC in Avon, CO.



**We celebrated and
bid farewell to**
Rev. Brandon Miles
who has served as
pastor of First, Florence to serve as
Pastor of Springhill PC in Mobile,
AL.



**We celebrated and
bid farewell to**
Stacey White, recent
graduate from
Dubuque Theological
Seminary and NAP Candidate who
accepted a call to serve as Pastor
of Freeport PC in Freeport, FL.
Stacey will be ordained and
installed by Florida Presbytery on
August 25th at her new church.

August NAP Events

Commission on Ministry

Carol Copeland, Moderator

Thursday, August 1 @ 6:00 pm
via zoom

Business Affairs & Personnel Team

Parker Moore, Chair

Thursday, August 8 @ 4:00 pm
via zoom

Executive Commission

Robin Palmer, Moderator

Monday, August 19 @ 10:00am
via zoom

It's time to order new PCUSA calendars for your staff, session, teachers, and congregation!



2024-2025 Presbyterian Planning Calendar



- Monthly calendar pages from September 2024 to December 2025 on text paper that's easy to write on with pencil and that is erasable
- Lectionary for the Lord's Day and special liturgical days
- Colors for the liturgical seasons
- Liturgical days, programmatic emphases and secular holidays
- Monthly planning suggestions and resources
- Foldout synod/presbytery and world maps in color
- User-friendly 8½ x 11" size and hole-punched to fit into a standard binder

Cost \$11.00

(if ordered through NAP)

Email Krista at adminoffice@napcusa.org
with the number of calendars you'd like to order.

Shipping to NAP will happen in September
Payment will be due at the time of pickup/delivery.

2024 Important Dates

NAP Fall Stated Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Maranatha Camp & Conference Center
Scottsboro, AL

*Meeting includes: Worship, GA Commissioner Reports,
Election of Presbytery Unit members, Commission/Committee reports*

2025 Important Dates

NAP Winter Stated Meeting

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Copeland Presbyterian Church, Athens

*Meeting includes: Worship with Communion, 2024 Necrology, Installation of
Moderator & Vice Moderator, Voting on GA Constitutional Amendments,
Adoption of budget, Receive Related Ministry reports of membership*

NAP Summer Stated Meeting

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Location: TBD

*Meeting includes: Annual Parity Report, Election of NAC member-at-large,
Commission/Committee reports*

NAP Fall Stated Meeting

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Maranatha Camp & Conference Center
Scottsboro, AL



2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women
August 8-11, 2024 • St. Louis, Missouri

Please pray for our NAP representatives who will be attending the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in St. Louis this month: Harriet Bibb, Carol Copeland, JoAnn Horn, Janice Williams, and Stella Wilson. Barbara Allen, PW-NAP Moderator, will be attending online.



GA Impressions

from our NAP Commissioners

General Assembly Report

by The Reverend Tom Lewis

It was an honor to serve as the Teaching Elder Commissioner of the North Alabama Presbytery. I bring news to you of a denomination that is actively seeking the will of God in our midst. It would be easy for me to focus on one or two actions taken by the General Assembly. However, that would miss the important work that is being done to minister in the name of Jesus Christ in the midst of changing times.

The week began with the election of our two new Co-moderators: CeCe Armstrong and Tony Larson. It's clear to me that they are spirit filled leaders who have a vision for what the Presbyterian Church can be and should be.

During the course of the week, the General Assembly took action on matters such as Faith Formation, Gun Safety, Clean Energy, Solitary Confinement, White Nationalism, A new funding model to replace per capita, and many more things. I saw good Christian People striving together to hear and discern God's will. It's gratifying to see that the church still has a voice to preach even in today's world.

Some of the decisions we made were controversial. Those decisions generated a lot of discussion. But the atmosphere remained cordial. Steps were taken to preserve Freedom of Conscience and differences of opinion were handled in a loving, Christian Manner.

You may wonder what any of this has to do with the local church. Frankly I have asked myself that on a number of occasions throughout my life. But I saw lots of concern for the local church out there. Perhaps the one thing that I saw that excited me the most was the property seminar on Wednesday morning. It was exciting to see all the innovative ways that churches are using their property to do the work of the Kingdom.

In short, the church is alive and well. Perhaps, the comment I heard that summed things up best was, "The church is not dying; it is changing." I for one am excited to be part of the change.

Tom Lewis

General Assembly Report

by Mark Icenogle

In Salt Lake City, two blocks from Temple Square, for five days, the General Assembly (GA) met to conduct the business of the PCUSA. I wasn't sure what to expect, this being my first time at the GA. I was the "Ruling Elder" for North Alabama Presbytery. This seems like a title that didn't fit and wasn't deserved for me, but asked to serve, I have a difficult time telling my pastor no, so there I was.

I was one of about 420 commissioners tasked with voting on items of business. I never missed one vote. I even showed up early and on one day got drafted to serve communion with 47 other Elders to probably over 600 people. I held the cup of salvation.

I've been to large business conferences in my past career, but without question this was the most diverse group ever. Everyone was represented, Black, White, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQIA+. Now if you embrace the PCUSA progressive, non-discrimination agenda, as I do, you would be proud of your denomination.

The meeting was conducted without any hitches. The newly elected co-moderators did a fantastic job along with the stated clerk. The technology was top-notch and without glitches. Very smooth and lots of people you didn't see made it happen.

My advice to you, if asked, accept this assignment. I was reluctant, feeling not up to the task but now forever grateful for the opportunity. My report of some of the business agenda and the vote results will be presented at the next meeting of our Presbytery. See you there.

Mark Icenogle

General Assembly Report

by Avy Elmore

This July I was blessed to attend the General Assembly meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah as a Young Adult Advisory Delegate, or YAAD. When Rev. Jaina Anderson Glaze asked me about my interest in this commitment, I excitedly accepted her invitation to attend GA as a YAAD. Leading up to the event I was nervous but eager to step into my role as a first time GA attendee and YAAD on the Polity committee. Each committee held meetings over Zoom the week before the in-person portion of GA and voted on many items. In my Polity meetings, I was really happy to have the privilege to approve POL-1, which added gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of rich diversity reflected in the church's membership, and I was overjoyed to see it pass with such support during plenary.

I felt that the YAADs I met were true ambassadors of Christ in their willingness to speak up for themselves and to open their hearts to hear others' truths. I met some beautiful friends that I hope to know for my lifetime. We were by no means always in agreement, but I felt God's grace acting through us as we shared in fellowship a love for the church and a fervor for its future. Us YAADs were constantly encouraged to speak our minds. We were reminded that not only are we the future of the church, but its present, too. I believe we all felt a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to commune and learn from one another and our commissioners during the lengthy process of preparing ourselves for voting for items and simply getting through each plenary session. I would like to thank Rev. Tom Lovell, Rev. Tom Lewis and Mr. Mark Icenogle for supporting me as North Alabama Presbytery's YAAD. Your guidance and understanding much needed and deeply appreciated.

I will admit that when I agreed to attend, I didn't quite know what I was getting in to. It was an eye-opening experience to witness and be a part of the work that is done by our national church to represent its members to its best ability. Attending General Assembly reinforced my confidence in identifying as a Presbyterian within the PCUSA and showed me the true heart of our church. I am so extremely grateful for the opportunity, and I hope to one day return to GA as an elder of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Decatur.

Peace and blessings, Avy Elmore



GA Highlights & Actions

GA commissioners and advisory delegates got a lot done in Salt Lake City.

Here are some of the highlights of the 226th General Assembly from the Presbyterian Outlook writers:

The Rev. Jihyun Oh is elected, then installed, as Stated Clerk

With family members laying on their hands and more than 500 commissioners and advisory delegates in full-throated support, the Rev. Jihyun Oh, director of Mid Council Ministries in the Office of the General Assembly, was elected and then installed Monday as the next Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). “I love this church for who we have been, warts and all, and for who we are now, and who we will become as we faithfully discern God’s call for us,” Oh told the Assembly. Rev. Oh is the second woman who will serve as the denominations Stated Clerk and the first woman of color to be elected to this position.

The Rev. CeCe Armstrong and the Rev. Tony Larson are selected as Co-Moderators

Hailing from adjacent presbyteries in South Carolina, the Rev. Tony Larson and the Rev. CeCe Armstrong were elected on the first ballot on Sunday by a 249-171 count. Prior to their election, Larson and Armstrong sported stoles that formed the PC(USA) logo — but only when they stood next to one another. They called that a symbol of working together for the good of the Church and those it serves.

Both portions of the ‘Olympia Overture’ are approved

Commissioners approved a two-part change to its Book of Order, adding gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of the “rich diversity” reflected in the church’s membership (recommendation 1, section F-1.0403) and then recommending an examination of these principles for ordination and installation (recommendation 2, section G-2.0104b).

The final language of recommendation 2 in G-2.0104b (changes in bold):

Standards for ordained service reflect the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404) **the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01), and in the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403.** Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

‘Our ancestors’ wildest dreams’

In a tribute brimming over with affection, admiration, gratitude, tears, laughter and the occasional touch of irreverence, the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, the former Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA), was joyfully celebrated for changing the denomination that shaped and changed him. Throughout the evening, Nelson — who retired in 2023 — was lauded for cultivating young adult leadership and for his never-ending commitment to addressing social justice challenges including poverty, discrimination and gun violence.

PCUSA Special Offerings will be reduced from four to three beginning in 2026 marking a move from “program based” offerings to “cause based” offerings.

The new Special Offerings and their beneficiaries are:

Christmas Joy Offering, during Advent: at-risk children, youth and young adults, leadership development for people of color, Presbyterian-related Schools & Colleges Equipping Communities of Color, 35%; and the Board of Pensions assistance program for servants of the church in need, 35%.

One Great Hour of Sharing, interpreted during Lent and received on Palm Sunday and/or Easter Sunday: disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change and immigration, migration and refugees.

World Communion Offering, interpreted beginning Labor Day and received on World Communion Sunday: grants to other councils of the church reflecting WCO values. Proceeds would also be available for causes that include aspects that may be described as reconciliatory, including racial justice, gender justice, peacemaking, global witness and ecumenical and interfaith relations.

Churches and mid-councils will no longer retain a portion of the offerings, with 100% going directly to the PCUSA.

Budgets and Finances mean an increase in Per Capita Apportionments

By a count of 319-6, commissioners approved FIN-14, **setting per capita rates of \$10.84 for 2025 and \$11.26 for 2026.** Those figures include 64 cents during each of those years for items with financial implications approved by the Assembly. By approving 14 items of business with financial implications for 2025 and 10 items for 2026, commissioners added about \$625,000 to the 2025 budget and about \$607,000 to the 2026 budget.

They also approved FIN-13, the 2025-2026 unifying budget by a vote of 340-2. Ian Hall, the chief financial officer and chief operating officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, said revenues in 2025 are forecast to be about \$94.9 million, with expenses of about \$91.8 million. Those anticipated figures for 2026 are revenues of about \$95 million and expenses of about \$94.4 million.



The time is now! You've been hearing about Matthew 25 for the past few years, but you haven't taken the step to **add your voice to the choir** and join the movement. You've seen what other congregations are doing. You've been introduced to M25 at each of the Presbytery Stated Meetings.

SO..... What's holding you back? Think you're already doing enough? Need more information? As a Matthew 25 Presbytery, we have the resources to answer your questions and we're willing to meet with your session to help. Contact Krista Lovell (adminoffice@napcusa.org) or Lauren Rogers, our Ministry Engagement Advisor (lauren.rogers@pcusa.org) or any one of **our M25 churches** (First, Albertville; First, Cullman; Westminster, Decatur; First, Florence; First Ft. Payne; Faith, Huntsville; Fellowship, Huntsville) to learn more and get connected!



The following Ministry Grants were awarded in July



First Presbyterian, Cullman awarded \$15,000 to offset the replacement of the HVAC in their Fellowship Hall which is used for their food pantry and fellowship events.



First Presbyterian, Albertville awarded \$6,045.41 to offset roof repairs and lead glass repairs.

NAP Ministry Grant information and applications are located on the NAP website: napcusa.org

Celebrating Ministry Grants !



Earlier this year, Westminster of Florence was blessed with a \$25,000 grant to replace & enhance their existing sound system & speakers! WPC had been using their existing equipment for approximately 20 years. This grant enabled WPC to install a new Audio console, amplifiers, computer, iPad, Ptz cameras, projector, and wireless mics. Jonathan & his crew with Axis Sound & Lighting provided excellent installation, clean up & training to make this possible!

This new system will not only deliver beautiful music throughout the sanctuary, but the sermon will be clear and loud enough for all to hear. Our shut-ins and distant worshipers will be able to feel like they are a part of the service!

Thank you to North Alabama Presbytery for the grant to make this possible, Axis Sound for excellent installation & service, and to Larry Ramsey and Alonda Crosslin for their time in seeing this project through from beginning to end. Come hear for yourself & receive a blessing!



Since the early 70's, North Alabama Presbytery has been blessed by the work of our Peacemaking Committee to lift up peacemaking and social justice ideals and models in a world filled with unrest and division. To honor the work of the past AND honor our newly adopted status as a Matthew 25 Presbytery, we need your help in re-visioning how these two sister movements will look in North Alabama.

Volunteers Needed!



We are looking for individuals who embody the values of Peacemaking and Matthew 25 and are willing to work within the Presbytery to promote these values among our 26 congregations.

If you are interested in joining this Ministry Group, please contact Krista Lovell at adminoffice@napcusa.org or 615-516-7011

It's Time to Register !

The Wee Kirk conference aspires to provide Christ-centered opportunities for inspiration, encouragement, and community among leaders of small membership churches so they can do the same in their congregations and regions.

Emmanuel Living!

Jesus said, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." (John 14:23)

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard." (Isaiah 58:8)

Imagine your heart, your home, your church and your community being "God's Neighborhood" in which everyone...

- hears the Mr. Roger's call from God, "Won't you please be my neighbor?"
- is welcomed with open arms, open hearts, and open tables.
- greeted with the love of Christ and a "Howdy, Neighbor!"

Imagine the dawning, healing, and peace in your own heart, your own home, your own church, and your own neighborhood as EMMANUEL — God with us – truly comes and makes a home right where you are.

Imagine how you can be blessed by sharing hospitality in all its forms as you learn "EMMANUEL LIVING!"

2024 Tracks

- **Barnabas Track | The Pastor in a Secular Age** (begins Sunday after dinner), *Led by Rev. Dr. Andrew Root*
- **Biblical Track | Reclaiming the Book of Revelation for Worship and Faith** (Begins Monday at 3 pm), *Led by Dr. Christopher Holmes*
- **Creative Worship Track | Exploring Worship that's Welcoming!** (begins Monday at 3 pm), *Led by Rev. Burns Stanfield*
- **Leadership Track** (begins Monday 9 am and a Sunday night arrival is suggested) | **Making Room at the Table**, *Led by Rev. Dr. George B. Thompson Jr. and Rev. Dr. Beverly A. Thompson*
- **Mission Track | Missional Hospitality**, *Led by Rev. Herb Codington, Rev. Ray Jones, Lewis and Elsbeth Codington, and Elizabeth Codington, RN*
- **Spiritual Formation Track | Nine Spiritual Styles: Understanding and Caring for God-Given Diversity** (begins Monday 9 am and a Sunday night arrival is suggested), *Led by Rev. Dr. Martha Friz Langer and the Rev. Dr. Mark Friz*
- **Retreat Track**

Many people come to Montreat's Wee Kirk Conference simply to enjoy the fellowship of other believers in the beauty of Montreat. To encourage this, we have created a special "retreat track" that includes all the worship and plenary presentations with abundant time for prayer, recreation, fellowship, and spiritual renewal.

2024 Costs

Congregation Size	Per Person Cost	Couple Cost
Fewer than 100	\$200*	\$225*
100 and greater	\$380	\$405*

*A maximum of 6 persons, including clergy and spouse, from any one congregation may attend at the reduced rates. Additional persons will pay \$380 each.



Questions about registration? Email the registrar, Susan Akduman, at susana@montreat.org or call 828.419.9829.

To Register online—<https://montreat.org/events/wee-kirk-24>