

Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church

June 12, 2022 – 11:00 a.m.

Church in person and via livestream

Opening Music “Fugue on the Magnificat First Tone, No. 5” Johann Pachelbel
Wade Meyers, organ

Welcome

Welcome to all! Please register your attendance with the QR code on the back of the bulletin, or with the online link, or on paper in the church Gathering Space. Need help? Ask any usher.

Call to Worship *[responsive]*

We've come to worship God,
who makes streams flow from rock,
who turns the parched earth into springs of water,
who sends the rain from heaven
and makes the wilderness blossom and flourish.
As the deer thirsts for flowing streams,
so we thirst for You, O God.
Come, let us worship our life-giving God,
who pours out living water on all who thirst.

Opening Prayer

Hymn *[stand]* “For the Beauty of the Earth” Glory to God, #14

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession *[together]*

Creator God, you made us to be neighbors,
members of one family.
You created us to be helpers and friends to each another,
entrusting to us your justice and joy.
Yet we deny justice and joy to others,
creating worlds of poverty and pain,
lost opportunities, and the absence of hope.
Still, you do not reject us.
We ask your forgiveness and pray to be transformed,
In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Silence for Personal Prayer]

Assurance of Pardon

We Listen to God's Word

Children's Message

Carolyn Hayes

Children and youth leave for class. Children can be picked up after church in Room 30/31 or Room 32/33. At 11:00, youth will be released from class to find you.

Sung Response [seated]

"Come All You People"

Glory to God, #388

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Proverbs 3:13–18

- ¹³ Happy are those who find wisdom,
and those who get understanding,
¹⁴ for her income is better than silver,
and her revenue better than gold.
¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honour.
¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called happy.

Music for Reflection

"Thy Word"

M. Smith & J. Schrader

The Chancel Choir

Luke 16:1–13

¹ Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ²So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." ³Then the manager said to himself, "What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes." ⁵So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, "How much do you owe

my master?" ⁶He answered, "A hundred jugs of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty." ⁷Then he asked another, "And how much do you owe?" He replied, "A hundred containers of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and make it eighty." ⁸And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ 'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Jesus Applauds the Scammer

Rev. Mary Austin

We Respond to God's Grace

Hymn [*stand*]

"Change My Heart, O God"

Glory to God, #695

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory

"How Great Thou Art"
Fred Mosher, handbells
Wade Meyers, piano

arr. Brian Childers

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer [*together*]

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



THIS WILL BE A GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNLIKE ANY OTHER.

For the first time in four years, General Assembly commissioners will gather in person – at least for committee meetings – for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s first hybrid assembly, built around the theme “From Lament to Hope.” The assembly will be longer than usual: stretched out from June 18 to July 9, three action-packed weeks instead of one, with 471 commissioners and 111 advisory delegates. Committees will meet in newly-renovated space at the PC(USA)’s national offices in Louisville with mandatory masks and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Plenary sessions will be online — including a Juneteenth worship service on June 19, commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. An online “Hands and Feet” event July 7 will focus on ending cash bail.

The business coming this year reflects public policy concerns – from racism to gun violence to global warming – as well as internal issues facing a denomination such as declining membership and a growing number of small but faithful congregations. Here’s some of what to expect.

Climate change. The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) is recommending that the PC(USA) divest from five energy companies – Chevron, ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66, and Valero Energy – that MRTI says are not making sufficient progress to protect the planet from global warming. An overture from Hudson River Presbytery is calling for the denomination to fully divest from fossil fuel companies — setting up a likely debate over what’s the most responsible approach and whether the PC(USA) is moving quickly and forcefully enough in its response to climate change.

Racism. This assembly has a committee devoted specifically to issues of race and gender justice — including a report from the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation, which calls for more work to be done to “explore and expose where White supremacy is embedded institutionally and foundationally” in the PC(USA), and encourages congregations to investigate their own histories involving people of color. An overture from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy calls for the PC(USA) to apologize to African Americans “for the sin of slavery and its legacy.” And the committee will consider a report from the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force.

Israel/Palestine. There have been rumblings in recent months over remarks that J. Herbert Nelson, the PC(USA)'s stated clerk, made describing Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories as "21st century slavery." Debate over that may rise up again — perhaps as the assembly considers an overture from Grace Presbytery to declare that Israel's policies, laws and practices regarding the Palestinian people amount to apartheid.

Financial sustainability. The Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability is proposing a restructuring of the top levels of the national church — a recommendation that reflects concern about the ability of the current per capita funding system to sustain the denomination when so many mid councils and small congregations are feeling financial pressure. At the heart of this discussion: what structure and funding systems are needed for a denomination that's half the size it was 20 years ago?

Gun violence. Week after week, people of faith are called to pray for those killed and injured after yet another mass shooting. An assembly committee on Addressing Violence in the USA will consider overtures calling for the PC(USA) to support tighter gun control, including universal background checks before firearms can be purchased and a ban on the sale and ownership of assault weapons. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy wants the assembly to approve the "Decade to End Gun Violence," a 10-year campaign from 2022 to 2032 "to be conducted at all levels of the church."

Denominational matters. The assembly also will consider issues affecting the church itself, including a proposed amendment to the PC(USA) constitution to require that the minimum terms of call for all ministers would include 12 weeks of paid family medical leave. Also of interest: several recommendations to write new confessions for the PC(USA) and measures seeking to provide more flexibility for new worshipping communities and immigrant congregations in allowing their leaders to become ruling elders with voice and vote at presbytery.

Leadership. Two teams are standing to serve as the assembly's co-moderators:

- **Josefina Ahumada**, a commissioned ruling elder from the Presbytery de Cristo, with **Marilyn McKelvey Tucker-Marek**, a minister from Flint River Presbytery; and
- **Shavon Starling-Louis** of Charlotte Presbytery with **Ruth Santana-Grace** of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, both ministers.

The election will be held June 18.



Follow along from home: Presbyterians can watch General Assembly committee and plenary sessions via a live stream on the internet, and can track assembly business through www.pc-biz.org.