



Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Video Summary From Lament to Hope

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

As we look toward an online General Assembly in June, we must first reflect on the assembly that was to meet in Baltimore. The work of preparing for this assembly has occurred over the past several years and has involved the commitment and creativity of many people on the ground in Baltimore Presbytery. We give thanks for that work and grieve the plans that changed with the spread of COVID-19. We pray for those in the convention center and our partner hotels who found themselves as new hospitals in the city. We pray for those whose work would have been positively impacted by the arrival of Presbyterians seeking to accompany them in doing justice. We join together in lament for all that could have been and for the pain left by this loss.

And yet, we know God has promised that, no matter what happens, we have a guiding host to shepherd us through. So, while this upcoming General Assembly comes with lament, we also must see that it comes with hope. Presbyterians are finding new ways of reaching out to their communities. Pastors are creating new spaces for worship beyond the sanctuary. We have found that church can take place on our beds and sofas and while walking the dog. God is in the business of liberating us in ways we could never have imagined. Therefore, as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we are challenged to use what we have at our disposal to continue to do God's work. We will come out on the other side of this pandemic changed, but we will have done so by remaining faithful to God's call. Our faith will be a witness to the world that we did not become idle, but rather the Presbyterian Church used tools we weren't accustomed to, learned a little more together, and continually tries to be who God wants us to be in this present age. In this we may be able to truly capture the essence of God's power and move from lament to hope.