

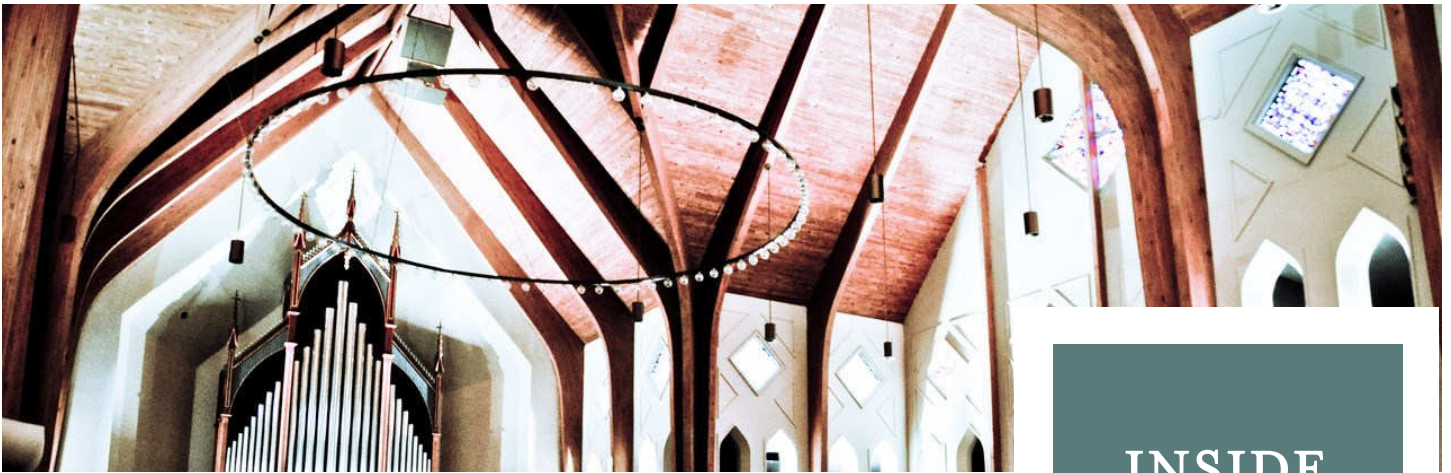


NEWSLETTER

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest; lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad; I found in Him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

Horatius Bonar, 1846



REPORT FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

by Ruling Elder Rob Jackson

Our Church sent Darwin Jordan, Keith Easterling and me to the PCA 51st General Assembly held from June 11-13, 2024, in Richmond, Virginia. Thankfully, Kaye, Mary Ann and Jenny joined us, and it was truly a great time together. All of us enjoyed seeing old friends and observing so many, many others doing the same.

Bryan Chapell, the Stated Clerk of the PCA, reported that 2,113 commissioners were in attendance (1,459 Teaching Elders and 654 Ruling Elders), making this the 4th highest attended General Assembly. He also reported that our overall numerical growth, though modest, makes us one of only two growing denominations in the US. (We must surely pray for the Holy Spirit to move in our country.) Specifically, during the last year, the PCA had 5,411 infant baptisms, 4,859 new child professions of faith, and 4,641 adult professions of faith. Further, Bryan reported that RUF ministers to over 20,000 students each week in the U.S. and throughout the world! Bryan encouraged the Assembly to continue to be Scripturally faithful and keep the Great Commission as our top priority.

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SUNDAYS

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship, 6:00 p.m.

I was assigned to participate in the committee that oversees the PCA Foundation. The committee's leadership reported that it had distributed approximately \$23 million to PCA churches and agencies in the past year, and, notwithstanding this, it had seen an overall increase in the Foundation's assets from the prior year by \$56 million. (As an aside, our church's remaining debt from the construction and outfitting of Currie Hall and Mac Hall is down to around \$300,000 – wouldn't it be encouraging to retire that this year?)

As to particular noteworthy matters or decisions from the 51st General Assembly, one amendment to the Book of Church Order ("BCO") was to add clearer language regarding the chastity and purity required for Deacons, Elders and Pastors. Another similar matter was to approve a letter to be written to federal government officials encouraging passage of legislation to end the practice of sex change operations.

An extensively debated matter that ultimately passed was whether to approve a change to BCO 7-3 as follows:

7-3. No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scripture. Furthermore, unordained people shall not be referred to as, or given the titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon.

Some commissioners representing Korean churches in the PCA argued against this amendment on cultural grounds, saying that it is common in their churches to address an older man as "elder" in Korean to show respect and to address both men and women Christians as "deacon" in Korean in reference to their being servants of Christ. Other commissioners objected to the amendment on different grounds, stating that because their churches believed that women should be qualified to serve in the office of Deacon, their practice has been to "commission" both men and woman as Deacons without "ordaining" them. After this Overture passed, some Commissioners signed their names to record their "no" vote.

The GA passed an overture to encourage Presbyteries and Sessions to conduct background checks on officer candidates. This topic also had a lengthy debate, as some argued that background checks should instead be made mandatory.

A measure that failed by less than 50 votes was whether to cause the "Directory of Worship" contained in our BCO to have constitutional authority. That is, this section of the BCO is an advisory document, unlike the portions of the BCO dealing with our form of Church Government and the Rules of Discipline, both of which have constitutional authority and are binding.

A thoroughly debated Overture that failed to pass was whether to amend the BCO to permit a Church Court to allow non-theists to testify as a fact witness.

During debates, the Moderator requires a commissioner rising to speak to first identify himself as speaking "for" or "against" a matter, and also requires speakers to alternate between those supportive and opposed to the matter until the Assembly calls the question and moves to a vote. Sometimes during debate commissioners propose amendments from the floor, requiring further "for" or "against" speakers on the amendment to argue whether the proposed amendment should become the main motion. There are times when the best among us can get lost. One funny moment was when the Moderator of the Assembly (who was excellent) asked a speaker "[w]here are we", and he replied, "Mr. Moderator, we are in Richmond, Virginia."

Lastly, the worship services on the three nights of the Assembly were a wonderful way to end each day. There was encouraging and exhorting preaching to follow and serve Jesus, and it was so good to hear so many worshippers sing out. The last of the three services was led by our Korean Presbyteries. The speaker alternated between Korean and English (which is their practice in their worship services). It felt like Jesus' Church!

The next General Assembly will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee on June 23 -27, 2025.

STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

We are so excited about all that is happening in the Student Ministry!

Though we were sad to see **Laura Gunnufsen** go after caring for our youth so well, we were happy to welcome two new interns to the fold for the summer. Our very own **Lily Boyd** has served our girls this summer, helping to host regular events and teaching a weekly Bible study. **Will Devenish** also joined the team for the summer, driving in each week from Jackson to care for our youth guys. He also led a weekly Bible study and helped host several events. We are thrilled to announce that Will will continue into the new school year as our youth intern.

Another exciting change to our youth staff is the addition of **Josh Kines**, who has joined the team on a part-time basis. He will be helping out with our youth and young adults ministries.

Our summer has been busy with numerous activities like the RYM conference, youth game nights at the church, swim parties, bowling, and a lock-in. As we ramp up for the start of another school year, we are looking forward to a host of discipleship outlets for our youth, including Wednesday night gatherings, youth breakfast meetings, Sunday school, the annual fall retreat, as well as fellowships throughout the year.

We are excited about what the Lord is doing in our youth ministry right now and covet your prayers for its continued growth!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

by Dr. Kathy Young

We are so excited about the upcoming school year at FPC! Our big Sunday School class for children has been great, yet we are looking forward to the kiddos in their new classrooms on Sunday, August 4, where they can enjoy small group learning once more.

Freedom Ranch will be here with us on August 21st to kick off Wednesdays with *Creation Exploration*.

The following week will begin our **Wonder Night** schedule, with recreation from 5:45 until 6:15, Gathering Time, and the Wonders of Word and Music Classes. Our children's music leaders this year will be Hilary Strum (3rd - 6th grades) and Christine Bellew (K4-2nd grades). The Bible classes on alternating weeks feature interactive and meaningful activities while learning truths in God's Word!

A new **Communicant's Class** will begin in August, and the **4 Corners Café** will begin in September with more hands-on learning about missions. Expect fun learning in these and other ways!

Contact Kathy if you have any questions about Children's Ministry at FPC or would like to contribute in any way.



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