

*Bridget D. Hawkins
500 Newford Drive
Bellefontaine, Ohio 43311
hawkinsbridget@gmail.com
937-844-9432*

The Rev. Lynn Bova, Stated Clerk
Presbytery of the Miami Valley

Re: GA 225 Commissioner's Report

Greetings:

I was selected to serve as a Commissioner to the 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA. The theme of the assembly was from Lament to Hope. The assembly utilized a hybrid format, and all committee sessions were held at the Presbytery Center in Louisville, Kentucky from June 18 to July 3, 2022. On July 5, 2022, the General Assembly reconvened with more than 400 commissioners and approximately 120 advisory delegates via Zoom, this session is called the plenary. Prior to attending the general assembly, we were required to complete online training where we learned about General Assembly Agencies, and the basics of parliamentary procedure. In addition, we were introduced to the technology that would be used during our committee sessions and the plenary.

I was selected to serve on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Engagement Committee, which addressed our relationships with other denominations and faith traditions. We met in Louisville, Kentucky from June 27, 2022, thru and including June 29, 2022. The moderator of our committee scheduled two Zoom meetings with the committee so we could get to know one another prior to arriving in Louisville. In addition, several members of our committee met at the Old Spaghetti Warehouse the night before the meetings began to enjoy a time of fellowship together. I believe that these actions on the part of our moderator enabled all of us on this committee to become a cohesive group.

Each day began with worship and then we all got down to business. The moderator broke us down into different groups each day to consider each overture presented. Also, to ensure that we got to know everyone on our committee she would move our nametags so that we did not sit in the same seat every day. Our committee had eight overtures to consider and each one was interesting to me. The overture that stirred the most debate and that was also removed from the consent agenda was ECU-08 Solidarity with Palestinian Christians. After much debate within our committee this overture was passed and placed on the consent agenda, however it was removed from the consent agenda after a vote but in the end was passed. Prior to our consideration of this overture, we were informed that there may be protestors outside the center the next morning. I have to say that the protestors I encountered outside the presbyterian center were very polite and kind. I was impressed about how much time was spent on the overtures that were submitted for consideration. Those committees would spend several months or sometimes several years of study on the

overtures submitted. When I realized how much time was spent on each overture submitted it is a humbling experience to consider them and I immediately realized that the task I was given would or could affect the church for years to come.

The plenary session was held July 5, 2022^h through July 9, 2022, online from 11:00 am until approximately 12:00 a.m. and the entire assembly met at that time and there were 17 plenary sessions. The plenary was co-moderated by Rev. Ruth Santana- Grace of Philadelphia Presbytery and Rev. Shavon Starling-:Louis of Charlotte N.C., and it is my observation that they did an excellent job and at all times acted with compassion and grace during times that could have devolved into expressions of frustration because of the length of time it would take to consider an overture. Some commissioner's felt so passionate about an issue that we would spend hours trying to get the language right. Our co-moderators knew when it was time to take a short break or a time for prayer. During the plenary session we considered all of the covertures that were removed from the consent agenda. Our last plenary session was a time of joy and celebration because we completed all of the items placed before us.

In conclusion I did not know what to expect at the General Assembly, but I am glad that I had the opportunity to serve our denomination and do God's work. It was great meeting other Presbyterians from around the country and sharing fellowship and laughter with them. I found it to be an uplifting process and if you want to know what being a presbyterian is about you should seriously consider serving as a commissioner at the next General Assembly when asked.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget D. Hawkins

Bridget D. Hawkins
Ruling Elder Commissioner-Presbytery of the Miami Valley