

EIGHTH SEDERUNT

ASSEMBLY CONSTITUTED

At Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, on Wednesday, June seventh, two thousand and seventeen at nine-thirty o'clock in the morning, the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment. The Moderator constituted the Assembly with prayer.

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS (cont'd from p. XXX)

The Assembly called for the report of the Committee on Business which was presented by M.R. McLennan, convener. M.R. McLennan moved, duly seconded, that the agenda for the eighth sederunt be approved as presented. Adopted.

(cont'd on p. XXX)

ECUMENICAL GUEST

The Moderator invited A. Currie to introduce the Rev. André Lavergne, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Mr. Lavergne presently serves as an assistant to the national bishop with responsibilities for ecumenical and interfaith matters. He also staffs the denomination's Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee and the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission, which nurtures the Anglican Church of Canada and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada full communion relationship.

Mr. Lavergne said, "For many years, Lutherans and Presbyterians made common cause in Canada as members of the 'PLURA' churches: Presbyterian, Lutheran, United, Roman Catholic and Anglican. In latter years, we meet around the Governing Board and many committee tables of the Canadian Council of Churches, KAIROS Canada and various expressions of the World Council of Churches. But in fact, our days go way, way back together. Calvin and Melancthon, were principal theological architects of the Presbyterian and Lutheran expressions of the Reformation. There is a growing ecumenical consensus that there is more that unites us, for all our apparent diversity, than divides us and we can live together and, more importantly, do good together in our differentiated unity. We have come a long way since 1517 and an especially long way in recent days."

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Assembly called for the report of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations committee which, as printed on p. XXX, had previously been received and adopted by the Assembly (p. XXX). The report was presented by A. Currie.

A. Currie invited commissioners to explore the report for the many links to opportunities for learning and engagement. She noted an interfaith gathering called The Parliament of the World's Religions that meets next in November 2018 and will be held in Toronto. Information is available online. She also drew attention to a worship resource prepared for the commemoration the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by a small group including representatives of the Christian Reformed Church of North America and The Presbyterian Church in Canada. October 2017 presents a good opportunity to further ecumenical connections through shared worship. This resource is intended to facilitate such worship.

REFORMATION @ 500 WORSHIP SERVICE

A. Currie led the Assembly in a service commemorating 500 years of reformation in the church. Following prayer, the Five Solas were emphasized by the reading of scripture and brief reflections.

Grace Alone	Ephesians 2:1-10	Reflection: The Rev. Frances Savill
Faith Alone	Philippians 3:4b-12	Reflection: The Rev. Peter Bush
Scripture Alone	2 Timothy 3:14-17	Reflection: The Rev. Sybil Mosley
Christ Alone	Colossians 1:11-20	Reflection: The Rev. Germaine Lovelace
To God Alone be Glory	1 Corinthians 10:23-33	Reflection: The Rev. Karla Wübbenhorst

The Assembly then joined in the singing of *Joyful, Joyful We Adore You*.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The Assembly called for the report of the Student Representatives. The Moderator invited each student to address the Assembly.

The Presbyterian College – Prudence Neba

Ms. Neba explained that she is from Cameroon and has been able to come to Canada and study at The Presbyterian College, thanks to a scholarship program established by the college. She called the scholarship “a bridge of love” and said, “I happened to be the first minister to cross through that bridge and here I am in Canada. I am so thankful to God, to this Assembly, for the opportunity. I think my church will be proud and happy to see me talk in this Assembly. I bring greetings from them. I believe we serve one God. Because of the bridges of love we share, we can be one another’s keeper.”

Knox College – Trish Archibald

Ms. Archibald noted that, as part of her theological training, she has gained a deeper understanding of church polity – how polity is essential and leads to good order. She said, “I am heartened to observe the rich diversity of our church represented here in language, culture and opinion. I cannot be anything but impressed by the overall civility of our process that I witnessed, even when results are not to one’s own heart’s conviction there was a grace evidenced. Thanks for this opportunity. It is truly worshipful work.”

Vancouver School of Theology – Andrea Perrett

Ms. Perrett said, “This Assembly has been difficult. These three days are a place where one might question their faith. Fortunately, I am so thankful that faith is a gift given of God and is not contingent on enjoying every aspect of the General Assembly. These days have been difficult and sometimes painful. But that isn’t the whole story. God’s grace has been with us this entire time. I observed many God moments – the kingdom breaking through – the work of the Holy Spirit – times when grace has shown up. Grace be with you.”

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES (cont’d from p. XXX)

The Presbyterian College

The Assembly called for the report of The Presbyterian College which, as printed on p. XXX, was presented by the Rev. Dr. D.S. Woods, principal. Mr. Donald Walcot, convener of the Board of Governors, accompanied him.

Receive and Consider

D.S. Woods, moved, duly seconded, that the report be received and considered. Adopted.

D. Walcot mentioned steps The Presbyterian College is taking to be relevant in the 21st century. He listed five initiatives: 1) Faith-to-faith/face-to-face program; 2) Program to train facilitators for reaching youth called Dependable Strengths; 3) Faith in the workplace; 4) Church planting and congregational renewal and 5) Supporting ministers through an extensive monitoring program for new ministers as they begin their ministry.

Recommendation No. 1 (p. XXX) was moved by D.S. Woods, duly seconded. Adopted.

Memorial Minute – The Rev. Dr. Joseph C. McLelland

A memorial minute recognizing Dr. McLelland’s many contributions to the congregational and theological life of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was presented to the Assembly.

Recommendation No. 2 (p. XXX) was moved by D.S. Woods, duly seconded. Adopted.

Memorial Minute – The Rev. Dr. William J. Klempa

A memorial minute for Dr. Klempa’s important and enduring contribution to the life and work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and beyond, was presented to the court.

D.S. Woods presented a video that described the ethos and vision of the college through the voices of students and faculty.

Report as a Whole

D.S. Woods moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

COMMITTEE ON REMITS

The Assembly called for the report of the Committee on Remits which, as printed below, was presented by J.P. Eastwood, convener.

Receive and Consider

J.P. Eastwood moved, duly seconded, that the report be received and considered. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 1

J.P. Eastwood moved, duly seconded, that Remit A, 2016 (p. XXX) re the revision of Book of Forms sections 65–80.2 regarding overtures and petitions be approved and that this become the law of the church and that the Book of Forms be amended accordingly. Adopted.

Report as a Whole

J.P. Eastwood moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

YOUNG ADULT REPRESENTATIVES

The Assembly called for the report of the Young Adult Representatives.

The young adults offered prayer and reflected on some of the Assembly considerations they felt most passionate about, including water and justice, church unity, and ecumenical and interfaith relations. They gave thanks for the support of the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee and the Rev. Matthew Brough, the Moderator, staff and commissioners who spoke with them. One concluded, “These few days have been fairly intense as the Assembly addressed controversial topics. While the Assembly has shown formidable courage in bringing these issues to light, there is still so much more to be done. We continue to encourage that the issues brought forward at this Assembly be addressed promptly, whether they be concerning justice for our First Nations brothers and sisters or decisions surrounding the LGBTQI in the church. The Young Adult Representatives are hopeful that God will grant our church leaders the strength and grace needed to help our denomination move forward as one body united in Christ.”

COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES (cont'd from p. XXX)

Report as a Whole

M. Sams moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

COMMITTEE ON TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Assembly called for the report of the Committee on Terms of Reference for the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada re Sexuality Overtures, Recommendation No. 2

Receive and Consider

A. Van Nest moved, duly seconded, that the report be received and considered. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 1

A. Van Nest moved, duly seconded, that the following terms of reference for the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, re Sexuality Overtures Recommendation No. 2 (p. XXX, XX) be adopted. Adopted.

1. The Special Committee shall create a safe and respectful environment in which confidentiality is assured, in order to encourage LGBTQI people:
 - a. to tell their stories of harm done to them within an by the church; and
 - b. to share their stories of God’s grace experienced by them and Christian ministry performed by them, even in the midst of the challenges they have faced.
2. The Special Committee shall invite LGBTQI people to submit their stories orally or in writing. Stories will be included in the committee’s report to a future General Assembly with permission of those who have shared.
3. The Special Committee shall make use of relevant documents of the church, including but not limited to:
 - a. the 1994 Human Sexuality Report;
 - b. Body, Mind and Soul study document and the individual responses received by the Life and Mission Agency and the Committee on Church Doctrine to it;
 - c. and any other such documents as the committee may deem relevant.

4. The Special Committee shall provide an appropriate response to the issue of homophobia within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
5. The Special Committee shall recommend concrete actions addressing homophobia to the General Assembly for implementation within the church.
6. The Special Committee shall report its progress at each upcoming General Assembly, with a final report by or before the 2020 General Assembly.
7. The Special Committee shall be made up of seven members drawn from across the church. The Special Committee shall be reflective of the ethnic diversity of the denomination and shall include at least two members of the LGBTQI community.
8. The Assembly Council shall be instructed to support the Special Committee with an appropriate budget and appropriate document support.

Additional Motion

H.J. Currie moved, duly seconded, that the Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly prepare a letter of repentance addressed to the LGBTQ community during his moderatorial year. Adopted.

Report as a Whole

A. Van Nest moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES (cont'd from p. XXX)

The Principal Clerk announced that the minutes of the fifth sederunt had been posted on The Presbyterian Church in Canada website and a number of printed copies would be available in the Assembly Hall.

(cont'd on p. XXX)

MODERATOR NOMINATE SPECIAL COMMITTEES (cont'd from p. XXX)

Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada

On nomination of the Moderator, it is moved by D.H. Rollwage, duly seconded, that the Special Committee re LGBTQI People and The Presbyterian Church in Canada be named as follows: M.J. Morris (opening convener), T.F. Archibald, J. Bae, D. Diviney, R.N. Faris, J. Johnson and B. Younan, and that the Special Committee be given power to issue should any of the above be unable to serve, or continue to serve. Adopted.

Report as a Whole

D.H. Rollewage moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE RECORDS (cont'd from p. XXX)

Receive and Consider

R. Lyle moved, duly seconded that the report be received and considered. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 1

R. Lyle moved, duly seconded, that the minutes of the Synods of the Atlantic Provinces; Southwestern Ontario; Saskatchewan; the Assembly Council and of the 142nd General Assembly, be attested as neatly and correctly kept. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 2

R. Lyle moved, duly seconded, that the minutes of the Synods of Quebec and Eastern Ontario; Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda; Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and Alberta and The Northwest be attested with notes. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 3

R. Lyle moved, duly seconded, that power to issue be granted to the Commission of Matters Left Uncared For or Omitted to attest the minutes of the Synod of British Columbia. Adopted.

Report as a Whole

R. Lyle moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

NOTICE OF MOTION

D. Krunys moved, duly seconded, that Assembly Council Recommendation Nos. 14 and 15 be reconsidered.
Defeated

COMMISSIONER'S OVERTURE

Witness of Coptic Christians within Northeast Africa & Egypt

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria is arguably the oldest Christian community in the world. Egypt is the cradle of Christian monasticism with its effects felt today within the world Christian movement. The Rule of St. Benedict, New Monasticism and other orders are based partly upon the teachings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Alexandria itself was regarded as one of the five primary seats of the early church, including Rome, Carthage, Antioch and Constantinople.

This witness to the gospel of Christ is not locked in the past but continues today in part through The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, and also through Reformed, Orthodox and Roman Catholic congregations. Coptic Christians have endured persecution for centuries becoming a minority within their nation. Tragedies such as the Palm Sunday massacre on April 9, 2017, in the cities of Tanta and Alexandria are not new. The New York Times on May 26, 2017 reported that since December 2016 more than 100 minority Christians have been murdered. This includes 28 earlier that week as a caravan of Coptic Christians travelled to a remote monastery.

Recommendation No. 1

M. Sams moved, duly seconded, that the Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly write to Coptic Pope Tawadros II assuring him that The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds the Coptic Orthodox Church, its people, and all the peoples of Egypt and Northeast Africa in its prayers and that we are reminded of our unity in Christ through their historic and ongoing witness to the gospel of Christ. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 2

M. Sams moved, duly seconded, that the Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly write to the congregations of our Reformed sisters and brothers within Egypt and Northeastern Africa assuring them that The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds the Reformed congregations and all the peoples of Egypt and Northeast Africa in its prayers and that we are reminded of our unity in Christ by their ongoing witness to the gospel of Christ. Adopted.

Recommendation No. 3:

M. Sams moved, duly seconded, that congregations be encouraged to engage with the Committees on International Affairs, and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in order to constructively work towards peaceful coexistence throughout the world and in our own neighbourhoods. Adopted.

MODERATOR CORRESPONDENCE

Additional Motion

M.W. Gedcke moved, duly seconded, that the Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly write to the Prime Minister of Canada urging the Government of Canada to comply with the Order of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (January 26, 2016 decision involving First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, et. al.) pertaining to the elimination of discrimination against First Nations children. Adopted.

COURTESIES AND LOYAL ADDRESSES

The Assembly called for the report of the Committee on Courtesies and Loyal Addresses which was presented by N.J. McIntyre, convener.

Receive and Consider

N.J. McIntyre moved, duly seconded, that the report be received and considered. Adopted.

Courtesies

We the commissioners of the 143rd General Assembly give thanks to God for being with us for these four days as we worshipped, listened, debated, met new friends, renewed friendships, remembering that God is with us “yesterday, today, forever”.

We acknowledge that Queen’s University is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet and worship here, and pray that we have walked with good hearts.

On behalf of the Assembly, the Committee on Courtesies and Royal Addresses thanks St. Andrew's Church and the Presbytery of Kingston for being such gracious hosts. The members of the Local Arrangement Committee and their generous donors cared for us with thoughtful transportation, delicious treats and delightful entertainment. They worked long hours and we are grateful.

We congratulate and thank God for the 200 years of faithful service of St. Andrew's, Kingston. We were moved by the Spirit lead Service of Word and Holy Communion on Sunday evening marked by joyous singing and warm welcome.

We thank those who planned and led inspirational worship each morning, and those who led us in prayer in a variety of languages.

Our gratitude and appreciation go to you, Moderator, for your cheerful guidance, wisdom and insights as you led us through these past four days. Your historical notes remind us of our rich heritage of caring. We, the Assembly, pray that God will bless you and your family as you represent The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the coming year.

We are grateful for the presence of the Young Adult and Student Representatives and for their courage in going outside their comfort zone to listen and learn about the Presbyterian Church at work.

We thank all of the ecumenical, international and interfaith visitors for sharing with us their insights and perspectives.

We were moved by the passion of Dr. Cindy Blackstock and pray that many will accept her challenge to be people who will work for change.

We thank all of the General Assembly Office staff for their patient preparations, support and leadership. They work exceedingly hard to make sure that everything goes smoothly.

We are grateful for the technical people who work their magic to make sure that those of us in the gym and those watching the live streaming can see and hear what is happening.

All of the commissioners, from across our wonderful country, are to be thanked for their commitment, faithful preparations and thoughts provoking discussions. We do not always agree with each other but we respect a variety of opinions and we do care about each other.

Loyal Addresses

To Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada

We, the commissioners of the Venerable, the 143rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada meeting at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, June 4–7, 2017, send to you loyal greetings. We give thanks to God for your devoted leadership as our constitutional Head of State, now our longest serving monarch.

We give thanks for your personal faith and commitment to God demonstrated by your life of service. The Venerable General Assembly prays that God continues to bless you and your family with wisdom and good health.

To His Excellency, the Right Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada

We, the commissioners of the Venerable, the 143rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June 4–7, 2017, send you greetings. We are grateful for your seven years of leadership and pray God's blessing on you in this your final year of service. May grace, mercy and peace be with you and your family as you enter a new phase in your life of service.

To the Right Honourable, Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

We, the commissioners of the Venerable, the 143rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June 4–7, 2017, send greetings to you and your family, your ministers and the Parliament of Canada, our most respectful greetings and prayers.

We pray that the grace of God will sustain and guide you and all the members of Parliament with wisdom, compassion and courage to be leaders of this country.

To the Honourable, Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

We, the commissioners of the Venerable, the 143rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June 4–7, 2017, send greetings to you and the members of the Legislature of Ontario. We thank God for your dedication and service to this beautiful province. We pray that God will grant you compassion, wisdom and integrity to fulfil the responsibilities of your office.

To His Worship, Bryan Paterson, Mayor Kingston

We, the commissioners of the Venerable, the 143rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June 4–7, 2017, send greetings to you and members of the city of Kingston Council. May God bless you with wisdom and compassion as you serve the people of this beautiful city.

Report as a Whole

N.J. McIntyre moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES (cont'd from p. XXX)

M.R. McLennan moved, duly seconded that the minutes of the first five sederunts be adopted as presented subject to corrections, and that the minutes of the remaining sederunts be taken as read and adopted subject to correction. Adopted.

COMMISSION RE MATTERS LEFT UNCARED FOR OR OMITTED

M.R. McLennan moved, duly seconded, that the Commission of Matters Left Uncared For or Omitted, consisting of the Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly and the Clerks of Assembly, be established until the 144th General Assembly. Adopted.

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS (cont'd from p. XXX)

Report as a Whole

The business of the Assembly having been completed, M.R. McLennan moved, duly seconded, that the report as a whole be adopted. Adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

The Moderator called upon J.P. Wyminga to offer the Lord's Prayer in Dakelh, the First Nation language. The Moderator also prayed.

The business being finished and announcements having been made, the Moderator entertained a motion to adjourn. It was moved by D. Krunys, duly seconded and adopted, that the 143rd General Assembly adjourn. The Assembly joined in the singing of the One Hundred Twenty-Second Psalm. The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer. He then said: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, and by the authority of this Assembly, I now dissolve this Assembly and appoint another General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to meet in Waterloo, Ontario, on the third day of June, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and eighteen, at seven o'clock in the evening local time.