

Be Bold: Nonviolence Works

Volume 74 General Assembly Issue Spring 2018

presbypeacefellowship.org @presbypeace

Welcome to PPF's General Assembly Newsletter

Who We Are: Founded in 1944, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is a nation-wide community of Presbyterians who act on the example of Jesus to reduce war, violence and exploitation. Except for a small staff, we are volunteers who pay our own way to General Assembly. We are non-partisan and we do not work for or represent any outside government or outside lobby group. We welcome all Presbyterians. Here is our Spring Newsletter with a special focus on GA 2018.

Please Join Us for...

The Peace Breakfast

Wed. June 20 7am-8:15am

America's Convention Center

701 Convention Plaza, St. Louis

Sponsored by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

"This is my favorite event at GA"
-Past Commissioner

Featuring

Peaceseeker Awardees:

rev. abby mohaupt

Prophetic and Pastoral Leadership for
Climate Justice

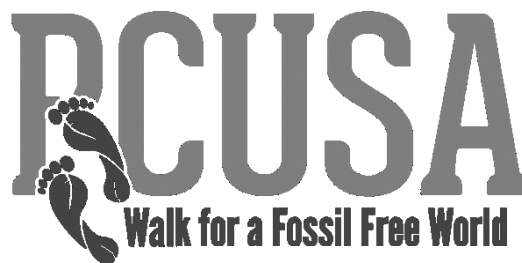
Rev. Dr. William Barber

& Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis

Co-Moderators of the New Poor People's
Campaign: A Call for Moral Revival



**Tickets \$24 at ga-pcusa.org
or \$22 at presbypeacefellowship.org/ga223**
Full Plated Breakfast. Act Now --This Event Sells Out!
Commissioners with GA nametags receive a \$5 rebate
at the event to assist with your GA expenses.



June 1 -16

Louisville to St. Louis

The effects of fossil fuels on our world and its people are dramatic. So is the action many will take to support Presbyterian divestment from the fossil fuel industry. From June 1 - 16, participants in the **PCUSA Walk for a Fossil Free World** will travel by foot from Louisville, KY, the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church, to St. Louis, MO, the location of the 223rd General Assembly, a journey of 260 miles. The Walk is a project of Fossil-Free PCUSA and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Each night the walkers will stay with churches on the route, offering teach-ins and worship centering on the stories of people on the front lines of climate change.

The purpose of the walk is to embody and support the overtures from 40 presbyteries asking the GA to take a prophetic stand for divestment in a time when our nation is in denial about the havoc and violence that human-caused climate change brings. Walk endorsers include Presbyterians for Earth Care, climate scientist Bill McKibben and several past moderators of the PC(USA) General Assembly. See more at pcusawalk.org/blog/

Many young adults will be among the walkers, such as Madison Winters, a college student and member of First Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, VA. "I'm walking to General Assembly because I want to make a difference about fossil fuels," says Madison. "If we do not take care of our planet, it will stop taking care of us."

To learn more, to endorse the Walk, to contribute funds, to become a "Virtual Walker" or to walk all 260 miles or some portion of the Walk, including walking on the final day of arrival in St. Louis, see pcusawalk.org
Pray for the Walk. Follow it at [#walk2divest](https://twitter.com/walk2divest)

Dear Commissioners to the 223rd General Assembly and our Peace Fellowship Members,

Greetings! I hope that this General Assembly newsletter helps you prepare for the mega gathering of the Presbyterians. Closer to GA, our Committee Briefing Papers and other resources will be at presbypeacefellowship.org/ga223

Enjoy your time in St. Louis! Please visit the PPF Booth to say hi, to make new friends and to learn about the Colombia Accompaniment Program and all of PPF's projects. Take home a new edition of our *Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit* and other resources for your church or presbytery.

Issues of war, violence and peace are complex. Why, for instance, is a nearly 75 year old *peace* group supporting fossil fuel divestment? Why has PPF's own Endowment Fund already joined the world-wide movement for fossil fuel divestment? Why? **Because war and warming are lethally connected.** We know now that climate change will decrease things that make for life: land, food, clean water. It will increase things that make for violence and war: millions of people and animals uprooted from coastal areas and other no-longer-habitable homes --- fear, disease, disaster. PPF sees climate change as the greatest threat to peace ever known.

Your GA may be the most important one ever. Take to heart these words from Martin Luther King in his *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*: "Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of [people] willing to be co-workers with God." Thank you for being willing to come to GA to do just that!

If you have questions or concerns about these issues... or want to work together on peace overtures at GA... or just want to come and lend a hand, please be in touch at ga@presbypeacefellowship.org

In Christ, Rev. Emily Brewer, Executive Director



A Peacemaker's Calendar

Earth Day - May 13 Mother's Day – Giving Campaign for PCUSA Walk for a Fossil-Free World. Please see worship & giving resources at pcusawalk.org

May 20 Pentecost

June 1–June 16 PCUSA Walk for a Fossil Free World, Louisville, KY to St. Louis, MO. See p. 1.

June 16, The Walk Arrives at General Assembly

Sat. June 16, 7- 9 am

Progressive Presbyterians GA Issues Briefing Breakfast

Join us for breakfast and issue briefings for commissioners, advisory delegates, and observers. This is a great event and a good way to start your time at GA.

Location: Centenary United Methodist Church, 55 Plaza Square, St. Louis, about half a mile from the Convention Center. Free breakfast, but please register in advance at presbypeacefellowship.org/ga223 Also register for transportation if you will need it.

Sponsored by: The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, Presbyterian Voices for Justice, the Israel/Palestine Mission Network, Presbyterians for Earth Care, More Light Presbyterians, and Fossil Free PCUSA.

June 16-23, 2018 223rd Presbyterian General Assembly, St. Louis. See page 8 for Booth Talks at PPF Booth #119-121 in the Exhibit Hall, Exhibits Open 6/15-6/20.

Mon. June 18, 11:30 Israel-Palestine Mission Network GA Luncheon, "*P* is for Palestine, Tickets: ga-pcusa.org

Mon. June 18, Noon Peace Network for Korea GA Luncheon, Tickets: ga-pcusa.org

Wed. June 20, 7am – The Peace Breakfast
Hosted by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. See p. 1.

Thurs. June 21, Noon Presbyterian Writers Guild GA Luncheon, Keynote by James Atwood who will receive the David Steele Distinguished Writer Award for his books on gun violence prevention. Tickets: ga-pcusa.org

July 1 Last day to apply for International Peacemakers (Visiting Sept. 21- Oct. 15). Mission Partners from Haiti, Palestine, the Philippines, Rwanda, Syria, Venezuela and more. See Presbyterian Peacemaking Program at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking

Sept. 2–Oct. 7 Peace & Global Witness Offering
See presbyterianmission.org/peace-global

Sept. 19-22 Peace Fellowship Activist Council Gathering, Minneapolis, MN. Meet PPF activists from across the USA for networking, training, worship and planning. See presbypeacefellowship.org/ACfall18

Oct. 20 PPF Barstow-Driver Award Luncheon, TBA

BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

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Presbyterian Fossil Fuel Divestment – The Time has Come A Letter from PPF Peaceseeker abby mohaupt

Dear Commissioners,

As the 223rd General Assembly approaches, I am thankful to be a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We worship God and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ in a denomination that has long believed in the science of climate change and in our responsibility as humans to respond to the moral and ethical crisis accompanied by it. We serve a church that cares about climate change, one whose heart has been broken by the acceleration of climate change as it devastates God's good creation and harms our siblings in Christ. Just one example: our kin in Puerto Rico are still recovering from Hurricane Maria, a storm exacerbated by warmer temperatures and climate change.

In that light, there are many different overtures coming to General Assembly on issues related to climate change and environmental degradation. Surely the Holy Spirit is calling us to move.

At the core of our work in Fossil Free PCUSA is an overture to divest categorically from the fossil fuel industry. **Forty** presbyteries have supported this overture (08-01).

It asks for the 223rd General Assembly to do five things:

1. Commend the Board of Pensions and the Foundation for creating fossil-free options for participants and Mission Responsibility Through Investments for their ongoing hard work in shareholder engagement with companies in the fossil fuel industry.
2. Acknowledge that by making money off of the industry, we profit from our investments in the fossil fuel industry, we profit from the harming of God's creation and the suffering of other people.
3. Divest from the fossil fuel industry.
4. Seek out renewable energy investments.
5. Ask the Board of Pensions and Foundation to report on their progress to divest.

Each of us is part of the problem of climate change, which is why I am so grateful for the collection of overtures which call on our denomination to care for creation in many different ways. However, if we seek to live into our Biblical call to love God, each other, and creation with our worship, education resources, and buildings, we must also love God, each other, and creation with our investments. We are not doing that if we are still profiting from the fossil fuel industry. We must wrestle with the sin of climate change and our complicity in it.

As a denomination, we must divest from the fossil fuel industry and invest in renewable energy. In doing so, we can invest in just and ethical energy transitions that

support fossil fuel industry workers. This is part of our Presbyterian identity. The 202nd General Assembly voted in 1990 to make *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* the founding policy for the Environmental Ministries of the PC(USA) and Presbyterians for Earth Care. In 2006, the 217th General Assembly approved the Carbon Neutral Resolution. At the following General Assembly, *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming* was adopted. For decades, Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has faithfully worked to engage with fossil fuel companies, expressing our deep concern about continued use of fossil fuels. Faithful Presbyterians have joined the conversation in many ways. **Yet, for the fossil fuel industry, business as usual continues, without any significant response to this engagement.**

It is time we move to the next step. It is time to divest. We must do all we can to respond to the urgency of climate change. I look forward to seeing you at General Assembly. Until then, you are in my prayers as you deliberate and seek to hear where God is calling you.

In the name of the Resurrected Jesus,
rev. abby mohaupt, moderator of Fossil Free PCUSA

***Climate change is not an "issue."
Climate change is an escalating
catastrophe that is destroying God's
exquisite gift of creation.***

As followers of Jesus ---the one who preached about sparrows and fig trees and mustard seeds--- we have an urgent calling to renew and protect the fragile ecology of the earth. I have four grandsons (four and under!) and each of them revels in the wonders of the beach and the mountains and the forests. Will they be able to live free and breathe free and play free in a world becoming dim with pollution and extinction and climate-induced natural disasters?

As Presbyterians, we have both an individual and a denominational responsibility to act. Last year I switched my 403b Retirement Account to a fossil free portfolio through the PCUSA Fidelity Retirement Plan. I encourage all of us to examine our own practices and values as climate change eats away at our grandchildren's future --and the future of life itself. Divestment from the fossil fuel industry is an ethical mandate for all Presbyterian investments. The longer we wait to act, the more we are desecrating the creation God has given us.

**Susan Andrews,
Moderator of the 215th General Assembly,
PC(USA)**

Peacemaking at the 223rd General Assembly – Our Take!

General Assembly always presents an opportunity for the church to struggle with and respond to issues of war, violence and injustice. The 2018 GA in St. Louis will have a full agenda of peacemaking and social justice issues to consider. Texts of the overtures and reports can be found on the official GA website, pc-biz.org. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship's complete guide to GA is at presbypeacefellowship.org/GA223.

Committee 3: GA Procedures

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has prepared a package of amendments to the Standing Rules. Some of these are helpful and will simplify procedures. However, we regret that in (03-11), one proposal would limit the number of Theological Student Advisory Delegates at GA to 15. TSADs are among the most valuable voices at any GA. We need to hear from those who are committing their futures to the church.

We strongly oppose the suggested changes regarding Overture Advocates. Overture Advocates from presbyteries are essential participants in the GA committee process. Issues of war and violence are complex. Overture Advocates help clarify complicated overtures and personify the concerns and passion behind the issues forwarded to the GA from presbyteries. Why would we want to squelch the voices of presbyteries? The most drastic change, (03-19), would limit the advocates for each overture to two (from the originating and first concurring presbyteries) and deny the right to send advocates from all other concurring presbyteries. Overture deadlines and presbytery meeting schedules may require a supportive but less expert presbytery to "originate" an overture. The best advocates may be from later-acting presbyteries. Not all presbyteries are able to recruit or send advocates, and they often rely on other concurring presbyteries to fill that role. Other presbyteries may wish to share their own unique reasons for concurring with an overture.

The second change, (03-13), would prohibit Overture Advocates from participating in GA Committee open hearings, forcing them to speak only at the official presentation of an overture. Severe time limits on official presentations are why some overture advocates choose to speak in the public open hearings. They are able to share the particular concerns of their presbytery, but they defer to more knowledgeable advocates from other presbyteries for the official presentation. In practice, few advocates speak more than once to a committee, and presbyteries concurring with many overtures do not send advocates for all of them. We should thank, not curb, presbyteries that care enough to send advocates.

Committee 4: The Way Forward

The Way Forward Committee is tasked with receiving reports from The Way Forward Commission, The All-Agency Review Committee, the 2020 Vision Team, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and then developing recommendations for restructuring the denomination. What a task! This committee will have our sincere

prayers for the strength and wisdom to do this important work. Our hope is that any organizational changes will prioritize transparency, responsiveness, a structure that is "flatter" and less hierarchical, communication, and decision-making processes that provide for input from and participation by all church members.



Committee 7: Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee will consider an overture (07-01) to condemn all religiously inspired and motivated

violence, discrimination, and hate speech, in particular, those actions based upon anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviors and language. Presbyteries would be encouraged to create interfaith relations committees or task forces to promote interfaith relations, dialogue, and understanding.

Committee 8: Environmental Issues

The Overture on Directing the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuels and Actively Invest in Securities that Focus on Renewable Energy (08-01) comes to the 223rd GA with an historic number of presbytery concurrences, demonstrating that the support for fossil fuel divestment has never been stronger in our church.

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship endorses this overture (08-01) as the most urgent priority for this General Assembly – and the most important issue for a generation of Christians who are alive in the moment when we know that fossil fuels are destroying creation. This is a very difficult issue because so many of us have jobs in the fossil fuel industry and because every single one of us is complicit in the daily over-use of fossil fuels.

As a Christian peacemaking organization, we base our concern about the link between climate change and war on current research and also on the reality of human sin. As the planet becomes less hospitable, will cooperation and compassion reign? Or will fear and violence? If we can sound an alarm about that horrible prospect, we must do it. And we must do it now.

There are other overtures addressing climate change, but without categorical divestment from the entire industry, they are not enough. The overture (08-02), recommending selective divestment, would focus on the most egregious companies, including those not meeting the standards of the Paris Accords. This is good, but not enough. *The Overture on Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change* (08-03) would provide resources to mobilize congregations and councils for action and advocacy. This overture should be approved, but it also is insufficient. This is what we have already been doing.

There are two overtures (08-04, 08-05) asking us to “listen to the perspectives and voices of people most impacted by environmental injustice, including environmental racism.” When we do listen to such voices, we learn that many of them are calling for divestment. There is an overture (08-06) on healing the climate that urges clergy to “accept the mantle of moral leadership” and all of us to “incarnate the changes for which we long.” Overtures (08-09) and (08-02) suggest carbon pricing strategies. This corporate action is, sadly, unlikely to ever be implemented by the PC(USA).

The report (08-08) from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) should be read carefully by every commissioner. It recommends continued corporate engagement and rejects the idea of divestment at this time. The results reported from their years of engagement efforts to date are minimal, but MRTI appears to be willing to continue them indefinitely, with an inadequate grasp of climate science and its impact. It is clear that when the decision to divest is made, it will be made by the General Assembly itself.

Perhaps this is as it should be. **We believe that fossil fuel divestment requires study, debate and a vote by the commissioners to General Assembly. As much as we might want to skirt such a challenge, and refer it to someone else, there really is no substitute for the GA itself on issues of this magnitude.** At the last two General Assemblies, 2014 and 2016, those who were most sophisticated in the use of committee process and parliamentary procedures were able to prevent the GA commissioners from actually voting on fossil fuel divestment. Will that happen again? For six years, **presbytery after presbytery has called for divestment. Will the commissioners to the 223rd GA even be allowed to debate and vote on this essential issue?**

Do your homework! Study, pray and prepare yourself. Listen to the Spirit. The Presbyterian Church is not a cowardly denomination with its head in the sand. God calls us to care about the world and its people. We all do care! Therefore, we have a responsibility to study, pray, debate and vote on fossil fuel divestment---and not kick it down a disastrous road to all who come after us.

The question is not whether the PCUSA will someday divest from fossil fuels. Eventually, everyone will have to let go of fossil fuels. **The question is: what is the role of the church on this issue now?** What is our task at this very moment in American history? As investors of what is actually God's money, will we act while there is still time to make an impact on climate change? Will we inspire others to also have wisdom to act now? Or will we wait to act when it is too late? The Bible reminds us that where our treasure is, there will be our hearts. Have courage! Let us divest now and invest in a just transition for workers and the world.

Committee 9: Peacemaking, Immigration, and International Issues

Almost every item of business before Committee 9 contains helpful ideas to shape the church's response to

current global conflicts. **However, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship does not support A Resolution on Global Order and National Purpose (09-06).** This proposal for an expensive study is deeply flawed. It includes a statement to be endorsed by the GA that focuses on nuclear war and unilateral interventions, while neglecting conventional military actions by U.S.-dominated coalitions. The wording of specific concerns seems to imply that massive arms sales might sometimes be appropriate and that military policing should be strengthened. The most recent affirmations for peacemaking from the 222nd General Assembly are completely ignored. The makeup of the study team excludes specific roles for those with expertise in nonviolent peacemaking. More importantly, it does not call for representation from those most affected by our foreign policy—our global partner churches and institutions such as the World Council of Churches.

Although support for complete nuclear disarmament has been a long-standing policy for the PC(USA), an overture (09-08) on this topic offers helpful policy updates and calls for renewed commitment grounded in our new peacemaking affirmations (from the 2016 GA), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017), and the work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The five peacemaking affirmations of 2016 have also inspired several churches and one synod to declare themselves “Peace Churches” and an overture (09-03) lifts up their example for others to follow.

Global Concerns: The fast-changing nature of many global concerns means that some issues may reach the assembly as Commissioners' Resolutions, but a few have been articulated in overtures. A request by the Reformed Calvinist Church of El Salvador (IRCES) has motivated an overture (09-04) to create a new mission co-worker position to serve areas of high violence in Central America, as well as an advocacy coordinator position in the U.S. Similar issues are raised in an overture from New York City which requests a study and new recommendations on current socioeconomic and political realities in Central America. A resolution on Yemen (09-05) calls for ending military aid to Saudi Arabia, which is responsible for the bombing. *On Support and Prayer for the Church and People of South Sudan* (09-02) suggests a wide variety of diplomatic and economic approaches to address the conflict in that country. An overture (09-07) on Madagascar promotes civil rights and electoral reform and condemns illegal trafficking in natural resources and animals. An overture (09-09) on the Korean Peninsula focuses on prospects for reunification and hopes for peace.

Committee 11: Social Justice Issues

Committee 11 has a full agenda of overtures, reports, and resolutions, many overlapping with PPF concerns on violence, exploitation and human rights. Several (11-04, 11-12, 11-13) support full equality for LGBTQ persons in both the church and community. An overture (11-02) from Atlanta calls for a moratorium on the violence of executions and reaffirms PC(USA) long-standing opposition to the death penalty. There is a recommendation (11-11) to declare a Decade of Intercultural Transformation, train anti-racism facilitators, and encourage anti-racism training throughout the

church. *A Gospel from St. Louis* (11-10) focuses the attention of the GA on the challenges faced by the local community, especially in the area of criminal justice. A *Resolution to Respond to Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls* (11-07) establishes a task force to explore this topic and develop recommendations. Clergy sexual misconduct is addressed in a resolution (11-09) calling for greater transparency about the scope of this problem. One of the most important items to be considered is a major report (11-08) on drug policy with recommendations for treatment-based rather than criminalizing approaches.

Yukon Presbytery has sent an overture requesting expansion of the work begun by the 222nd G.A. on the Doctrine of Discovery, stating that “the import and depth of this study only emerged slowly as the committee pursued its work. Some of the depth of the work needed is only now becoming clear.”

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship recognizes 50 years of Presbyterian GA policy for steps to reduce gun violence. At the same time, if we listened, would God call our local churches to do more on this issue than most of us have? PPF supports Overture (11-14) *On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence*. This overture was written before the Parkland, Florida school shooting and its youth-led response. It seems that such a movement of the spirit is beginning in our country (See p. 7). **We encourage every commissioner and visitor at GA to take this prayer home to your local church.** You can also take home gun violence prevention education and action resources by visiting the PPF booth #119-121 in the GA Exhibit Hall.

Committee 12: Middle East Issues

While most of the business assigned to Committee 12 concerns Israel-Palestine, the overture *On Responding to the Current Syrian Crisis* (12-09) recommends a four-fold approach to address conflict in Syria: stop the killing; work for reconciliation; alleviate the suffering; and deepen PC(USA) partnership with Syrian Christians. Committee members may wish to add condemnation of recent U.S. military attacks on Syria, which will expand and prolong the violence.

Israel/Palestine: The 222nd GA approved an overture calling for advocacy against the detention of children by the Israeli military. Many thousands of Palestinian children have been detained and subjected to physical and psychological violence, denial of counsel, and forced confessions. The 2016 GA also condemned violence against children and recruitment of children by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. This year a new overture (12-06) seeks “balance” by emphasizing the militarization of children by Hamas. In fact, the vast majority of violence against children is committed by the Israeli military or by Israeli settlers. The response to this overture (12-06) should begin with a reaffirmation and restatement of the action of the 222nd GA. Another follow-up to a 2016 GA action involves asking RE/MAX to stop listing, selling, or renting property in East Jerusalem and the West Bank (12-07). The company promised actions and dialogues after the GA. These actions never occurred.

Two overtures (12-03 and 12-04) ask for a response to an open letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP). The letter calls for vigorous solidarity with Palestinians in this “impossible moment.” Passing these overtures would begin a process of serious study and dialogue so that we can respond to the letter in a meaningful way. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends another timely study on the status of Jerusalem (12-08). Item (12-05) encourages justice-based Jewish-Christian dialogue about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and encourages freedom and boldness to criticize practices and policies of Israel, as we do any other global political entity, without fear of being labeled anti-Semitic. An overture (12-01) in opposition to Anti-BDS legislation opposes laws such as the Israel Anti-Boycott Act, which imposes civil and criminal penalties for participation in Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions actions in response to human rights violations by Israel. **Such laws violate the First Amendment, which guarantees the rights of free speech and nonviolent protest.**

An overture (12-02) advocating for the human rights of all citizens of Israel focuses on discrimination against Muslim and Christian citizens, and calls for suspending military and economic aid until Israel is in full compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The overture should be amended to clarify that this is an additional reason and not the only reason that the PC(USA) has asked to end to such aid.

Committee 14: Theological and Church Growth Issues and Institutions

Committee 14 has the opportunity to create new theological resources to serve the church far into the future. An overture (14-01) on the Belhar Confession would develop a letter to be published alongside the confession to add context specific to U.S. history and culture. Such a letter would make our study and use of the confession more relevant to our current struggles with racism and other injustices. Another overture (14-05), in its entirety, states “The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to approve ‘Letter from Birmingham City Jail’ by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as a contemporary statement of faith, a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration (with the understanding that only the current Book of Confessions has constitutional standing).” **Adopting “The Letter from the Birmingham Jail” as a statement of faith may be one of the most important items of business before the GA.** The Birmingham letter grounds our response to the issues of our own time in urgency and in an absolute commitment to nonviolence. We encourage all commissioners and advisory delegates on all GA committees to study this timeless condemnation of complacency (printed in the overture rationale) and use it to guide their deliberations and decisions on the timeliness of action on climate change, war, gun violence, racism, and every other issue before this assembly.

NONVIOLENCE NEWS...

Gun Violence Prevention



Google Map shows locations of Presbyterians using social media #presbysmarchforourlives from March 24 "March for Our Lives" Gun Violence Prevention marches. Sign up for PPF's Gun Violence Prevention network at JanOh4@aol.com

Coming to GA...

New Edition of the PPF Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit, "No Guns in God's House" Signs to take home

New Education & Action Resources

Visit the PPF Booth #119-221

There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society... Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning.... Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world?

--Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, 1963

Meet PPF's GA Interns!

Left to Right, Audrey White, graduate of the University of Texas, worked on sustainable agriculture in Nicaragua; Mina Haddad, graduate of Vanderbilt, returns from teaching English in India at a school for Muslim girls; Olivia Thomas, graduate of Rhodes College, weaves together art, writing and storytelling in racial justice work. The interns will be working at both PPF breakfasts, at the booth and on advocacy and direct action at GA. Come say hi!



GA Booth Talks – Conversations with PPF - Booth #119-121 in the Exhibit Hall

Sat. June 16, 2:30 pm How Presbyterians Can Faithfully Respond to Climate Change

Hear from PPF Peaceseecker awardee rev. abby mohaupt, moderator of Fossil Free PCUSA and one of the primary organizers of the Presbyterian movement to divest from fossil fuels. This movement seeks to respond with faithful action in the face of the urgency of climate change. It also seeks to be antiracist, feminist, nonviolent, and inclusive in its approach to climate change activism in the PC(USA) and as followers of Jesus Christ. Abby helped organize the PCUSA Walk for a Fossil Free World in which dozens of Presbyterians walked from Louisville, KY to GA.

Sat. June 16, 4 pm Walking the Talk for Climate Justice--A Conversation with Presbyterians who Walked to General Assembly with the PCUSA Walk for a Fossil Free World

From June 1-16, the PCUSA Walk for a Fossil Free World was out in action, walking to General Assembly and calling upon the GA to join the movement to divest from fossil fuels in response to the reality of climate change. Each night, Walk participants participated in teach-ins and worship that centered the stories and experiences of people most directly affected by climate change. Come and talk with some of the people who participated and supported this historic walk.

Sun. June 17, 3 pm Peace in Colombia ---Are we there yet??? The PC(USA) has been involved in Colombia accompaniment for over a decade. Through mission co-workers, the Young Adult Volunteer Program, and the Colombia Accompaniment Program, Presbyterians from the US have walked side by side with Colombian Presbyterians as they work for peace. Yet, now that the Peace Accords have been signed, these partnerships are as important as ever. Come learn about the current reality in Colombia and ways that you can participate in this important partnership, including information about a delegation later this year.

Wed. June 20, 2:30 pm Gundaymentalism and Where it is Taking America with Rev. Jim

Atwood - Visit with author, pastor, activist and recipient of 2018 David Steele Distinguished Writer Award from the Presbyterian Writers Guild. Jim will talk about the pressing issue of gun violence and how Presbyterians can and are responding. Others from the PPF Gun Violence Prevention working group will also be present to talk with visitors to GA who want to be involved in their communities to help prevent gun violence.

For Updates on GA Booth Events, see [#presbypeace](https://presbypeace.org/ga223) or presbypeacefellowship.org/ga223



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY ISSUE 2018

Hello, GA Commissioners!
Join us for the
Peace Breakfast June 20