

A message from:

Linda Valentine

General Assembly Mission Council

Becoming a more diverse and inclusive body

Greetings to members of the General Assembly Mission Council, mid council executives, and friends,

I have just returned from the National Multicultural Conference in Charlotte, N.C., where it was a joy to experience a foretaste of the “great multitude . . . from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” envisioned by John in the book of Revelation (7:9).

The conference’s theme, “God’s Door is Open: Who Are We to Stand in the Way?,” based on Acts 10–11, was designed to help participants to see changes in our church and culture not as threats but as blessings.

As I was inspired and challenged by such powerful speakers as [J. Herbert Nelson](#), I was reminded that this gathering represents what Christ’s church could—and should—look like. I hope that you will visit the [News & Announcements](#) website to read the Presbyterian News Service’s coverage of this exciting annual event.

In our mission and ministry, the General Assembly Mission Council supports the conference’s objective “to explore the many ways we can, individually and collectively, identify and dismantle the barriers to God’s open door, building hope and promise.” In the course of developing a new Mission Work Plan to guide our work over the next four years, we discussed the GAMC’s role in **inspiring, equipping, and connecting** the church to cultivate, nurture, and sustain diverse, transformational leaders for the changing church.

I am pleased to announce that my colleague in ministry and our GAMC executive administrator, Vince Patton, will be assisting in the promotion of our diversity in leadership initiative, including the [Diversity in Leadership Network](#). Vince will be spending a significant amount of time connecting with all parts of the church and reaching out to you and others to help identify racial ethnic individuals who have the transformational leadership qualities that our church needs.

Here in Louisville, one can’t miss the annual reminders that it is Derby Week. I am reminded, too, of the familiar passage from Hebrews that calls us to “run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (12:1–2). In the days and weeks ahead, I hope that you will join me in prayer for Vince and others as together we look to Jesus to help the church live out its call to become a more diverse and inclusive body.



Faithfully yours,

Linda Valentine