



The final leg

To the pastors and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

“Are we there yet?” the children call out on a cross-country trip. Finally, in the last leg of the journey, the parent can reply, “Not long now!”

It’s not long now until the start of the 220th General Assembly (2012) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Pittsburgh, Pa. Cindy Bolbach, Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010), will convene the opening session on Saturday, June 30.

It’s not long now until hundreds of volunteers from Pittsburgh Presbytery and beyond will meet and greet visitors, sharing their part of the Presbyterian family with warmth, grace, and genuine excitement.

It’s not long now until over 900 elected commissioners and advisory delegates from every presbytery across the denomination will begin the work of discerning the mind of Christ for the PC(USA). A few thousand more will be there to observe, support, and encourage them.

It’s not long now until those who gather in Pittsburgh will worship daily, singing familiar and new hymns of praise, sharing the Lord’s Supper, and hearing the Word proclaimed.

It’s not long now until a bare convention center hall will be transformed into an exhibit hall teeming with people and resources that represent, interpret, and tell the many stories of how God is at work through the PC(USA)’s mission and ministry in this country and around the world.

It’s not long now until those who have been attending General Assemblies regularly for years will join with those who are attending their first assembly to experience the highest council of the PC(USA)—from its passionate debates and complexity of issues to more lighthearted moments and glad reunions of friends and colleagues and so much more.

As our journey toward Pittsburgh ends, a small, hearty band of Presbyterians in particular may be especially glad to arrive. Led by Team Sweaty Sheep—a new worshiping community in Mid-Kentucky Presbytery—they will have ridden their bicycles 450 miles from Louisville, Ky., to Pittsburgh for the occasion.

As Ryan Althaus, a recent graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and “captain” of Team Sweaty Sheep told the Presbyterian News Service, “We all too often forget the interconnectedness of our denomination and our Christian faith as a whole. This is an exciting event during which we can show how close we all really are while at the same time experiencing the uniqueness and individuality of various congregations.”

And that is our prayer for this General Assembly. As we give thanks for our interconnectedness through Jesus Christ, may we follow Christ with faith, courage, hope, and trust on this and every leg of our journey.

Faithfully yours in the journey toward Pittsburgh,

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council