



February 2021

I think it was June of 2020 that it dawned on me that it was futile to predict with any confidence where we'd be 90 days into the future. At that time, we thought we'd hold a "normal, onsite" General Assembly at Hope Presbyterian Church in Cordova, Tennessee, in September.

Instead, we held an all-virtual General Assembly last year from this room, the Conference Room at the General Assembly Office in Orlando.

And when we met here in September, I thought I had reason to believe that by the summer of 2021 the pandemic shutdown would be in our rear-view mirror and we'd get back to normal. "Normal" would be a 2021 General Assembly at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, with 600 to 650 commissioners and more than 1100 attendees.

By now, I trust you're aware that a normal General Assembly is not going to happen in June.

Instead, we'll hold still another unique annual meeting— a hybrid one, in which we'll have up to 400 registered commissioners onsite and a to-be-determined number of registered commissioners participating virtually. This is because the essential requirements of masking and six-foot social distancing currently in place at our host church will remain in place through at least the summer.

This reduces the total number of commissioners that can gather to 400, with total attendance capped at 550.

We concluded our first notice about our altered 2021 GA earlier this month promising that we'd get back to you as we made the necessary adjustments to activities like our Standing Committees, Leadership Institute, Networking Lunches, and other meetings.

I want to talk about two key changes we've made because of our hybrid meeting.

First, standing committees. Some of the business our General Assembly takes up comes straight to the floor of the Assembly. The reports of the Nominating Committee, Benefit Resources Inc. (BRI), and Presbytery Review immediately come to mind.



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL

Other business comes to the floor of the Assembly for action through our standing committees.

Ordinarily, no less than eleven Standing Committees convene at a General Assembly. Those committees receive and approve recommendations coming from our Permanent Committees, and then report to the floor of the Assembly on Friday.

At this point, all the business that needs to come to us from our Permanent Committees—through our Standing Committees—can be referred to one of four of these standing committees: Administration, Theology, World Outreach, and Memorials & Appreciations. For this reason, we will have only four standing committees at this Assembly in June.

Due to seating capacity restrictions at our host church, we have to limit the number of commissioners participating in those meetings.

Following our Rules for Assembly, we will ensure all presbyteries are represented and that the Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder ratio is honored.

Due to the complexities involved, virtual commissioners will not be able to serve on standing committees.

But here's the good news: If you do not serve on a standing committee, you'll be pleased to learn of the changes we've made with the Leadership Institute. Which brings me to the second key change.

Instead of multiple "tracks" to choose from, this year we'll hold plenary sessions featuring some outstanding speakers. These sessions will be held in the Sanctuary, and live streamed so everyone can benefit.

On Tuesday, starting at 9:30 a.m. (Central time), Ligon Duncan will address "Combating Biblical Anemia in the study of Scripture, discipleship, worship, and preaching."

On Wednesday, John Lennox and Richard Borgonen will speak on apologetics and sharing the gospel through studying the Gospel of John.

And during the standing committee meetings on Thursday afternoon, we will have two special Leadership Institute offerings. Host church pastor George Robertson will talk about



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL

soul-care for pastors, and Rufus Smith will speak on what we've learned from the Revelation 7:9 Task Force.

Given the choice between serving on a standing committee and hearing George and Rufus, I won't be surprised if I have to beg some of you to do standing committee work this year!

But don't worry, we will record those sessions and post them on our website as soon as we can after the Assembly.

I want to take this opportunity to thank George Robertson and the staff of Second Memphis for the gracious way that they have responded to the unusual circumstances to make our annual meeting a success. Theirs is a wonderful, "How can we serve?" attitude in working with our GA planning team and preparing to host all of us in June.

As we have more information for you about our June 22-25 General Assembly, we will be getting it to you.

Thank you, God bless you and remember, He is risen!

Filename: JeremiahJournal-February2021.docx
Directory: /Users/bmsmbp162019/Desktop/OneDrive - EPC/Projects/1.
EPCConnection Articles/2021/2021-02I, February Jeremiah Journal
Template: /Users/bmsmbp162019/Library/Group
Containers/UBF8T346G9.Office/User
Content.localized/Templates.localized/Normal.dotm
Title:
Subject:
Author: jjeremiah
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 2/25/21 9:34:00 AM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 2/25/21 9:34:00 AM
Last Saved By: Brian Smith
Total Editing Time: 0 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2/25/21 9:34:00 AM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 3
Number of Words: 779
Number of Characters: 3,988 (approx.)