



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL**

## **September 2018**

Welcome to this month's Jeremiah Journal. I'm Jerry Iamurri, standing in for Jeff Jeremiah.

The 38th General Assembly at Hope Church in Memphis was a wonderful time of worship, fellowship, and decision making for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

I am very pleased to report to you that more than 1100 people from EPC churches and ministry partners from all around the world attended this year's Assembly.

The Assembly started off with our Leadership Institute, which attracted more than 900 people for the 19 workshops on topics ranging from preaching to discipleship, evangelism to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Among the important work that was completed at this year's meeting was the election of Ruling Elder Tom Werner as Moderator, and Teaching Elder Dr. Case Thorp as Moderator-Elect. The Assembly also unanimously re-elected our Stated Clerk, Dr. Jeff Jeremiah, to a new three-year term as the EPC's Chief Executive Officer.

The Assembly received a very encouraging report that annual Per-Member contributions continue to rise—from 65% in 2016 all the way up to 73% today. The Assembly noted with much gratitude the generosity of EPC congregations who seek to serve the Lord by supporting one another and the common mission we share.

Commissioners also approved a new Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality. This letter is designed to provide biblical guidance for pastors and sessions facing the many difficult questions that come up regularly in the life and ministry of the church. You can visit our website for a copy of this very important document.

The Assembly also approved an overture to expand the role of Commissioned Pastors in the EPC. Currently, a Ruling Elder with specialized training and presbytery approval can serve as a Commissioned Pastor in a church that does not currently have an installed pastor. Now what this overture—which will be voted on by each presbytery—would change is that it would permit Commissioned Pastors to serve in churches that do have an installed pastor. The reasoning behind this is to expand the pool of eligible, trained workers who can serve in a pastoral capacity in an under-resourced congregation.



*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL

Commissioners also authorized Moderator Tom Werner to appoint an interim committee to study how the EPC can better become a denomination that faithfully embraces, serves, and witnesses to our neighbors from every nation, tribe, people, and language—as the Bible calls us to do in Revelation 7:9.

The goal of this group is to help our congregations look more like the neighborhoods where God has planted them.

A great example of an EPC church that is already doing this is this year's Bart Hess Award winner, Restoration Church in Munford, Tennessee. Pastor Mike Gibson was presented with the Hess Award at this year's Assembly. This congregation is a great example of a church doing intentional evangelism in its community. They made a wide variety of changes in how they do ministry in order to reach the unchurched families in their neighborhood. You can read more about Restoration Church at the link on the screen.

Finally, for many the highlight of the Assembly was remarks made by Jaqueline Brunson Furnari, who shared some insights to her father Andrew's ongoing, unjust imprisonment in Turkey. Jacqueline shared encouraging letters from her father, and encouraged us to continue in prayer for Andrew's release—which we are most certainly doing.

We are grateful to God for His faithfulness to the Brunsons and to the entire EPC. Plans are underway for the 39th General Assembly, and we ask that you continue in prayer, never ceasing, for God's glory to be revealed in all we do together in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

God bless you, and as Jeff likes to remind us, "Christ is risen."