

The 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) met in Memphis June 13-15. Notably this year it was an opportunity to **mourn together**. Each of our three worship services and sermons, our prayers, and our 50th anniversary concert were marked by times of lament and remembrance in light of the recent shooting at Covenant School in Nashville and the recent homegoings of beloved denominational leaders. A video from Covenant Pres thanked us for our prayers and support and reminded us well of God's faithfulness even and especially in the midst of our grief, and having the opportunity to mourn and hope together as a church seemed needed and helpful.

At the same time, this gathering was also marked by the desire to **celebrate together**. As the PCA celebrated its 50th birthday, we rejoiced in God's faithfulness in so many ways and renewed our commitment to the reasons we exist to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission, as our founders communicated 50 years ago in a "Message to All Churches." The theme of the assembly was "Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow: Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Each of the sermons focused on this theme as Randy Thompson led us to reflect on God's faithfulness in the past and finding Him as our portion from Lamentations 3, Ligon Duncan encouraged us to lean in the present on God's resurrection power from Ephesians 1, and Les Newsom called us to hope in the future rather than give in to cynicism because of who our God is from Isaiah 28. All these worship services are available to watch online at [vimeo.com/pcaga](https://vimeo.com/pcaga), as well as the 50th anniversary concert from Indelible Grace that celebrated especially God's work through 50 years of RUF both through us and in spite of us. Finally, we celebrated together the growth of the PCA, highlighted by a return to pre-Covid membership growth (nearing 2,000 churches and 400,000 members) when most churches are in decline. In addition, by God's grace, our global missions agency (MTW) is currently the largest Presbyterian missions force in the history of the world, we are planting churches at the rate of one every two weeks, and any given week in the school year about 20,000 college students gather in RUF Bible studies. Praise God!

Finally, we of course had opportunity to **work together** during the week. Perhaps the fact that we worked together more than fighting against one another is most encouraging, as even the debates in our denomination are marked by a common commitment to God's Word and love for one another. We appointed a team to send a humble petition to our civil leaders condemning surgical and medical gender reassignment, especially for minors. We passed amendments to clarify character requirements for our church officers, particularly in regard to sexuality. We worked together to make changes to our rules of discipline in an effort to safeguard victims of abuse, and this work is ongoing. As we look to future, our MNA Committee cast a vision of planting and revitalizing churches that would require all of us working together to move the PCA from 2,000 to 3,000 churches in the next 10 years – join us in praying to that end! Whether we think about it regularly or not, it is a blessing to be a part of a denomination seeking to shape our church together around God's Word and God's mission, so thank God for 50 years of faithfulness to the PCA and pray for his Spirit's continued work for his glory.