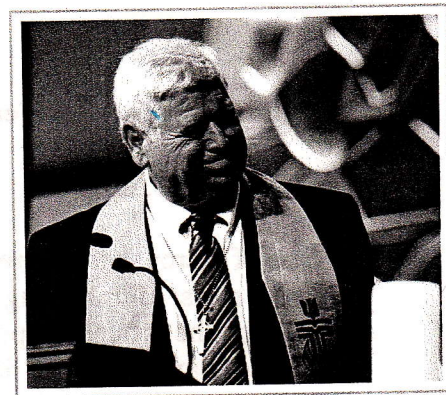


GA MODERATOR ISSUES COMPANION CALL TO THE CHURCH

Dear members and friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

Recently I issued a call to our denomination about issues that have been raised with me since my election as Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) in June of 2014. There is widespread concern, shared by many places in our church, that our denomination is in significant need of refinement. A number of people believe that we have been trying to operate as we did in the past when our membership was many times greater and our resources reflected those numbers. But even more importantly, I hear and believe that God's Spirit is calling us to be a new church in the 21st century.



So what do we do? How do we proceed as faithful servants?

We need you to share your thinking and discernment with the broader church. My Call to the Church has been received by many as a catalyst to help us move forward. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) has been engaged in a conversation for a long time about what is needed to make a difference, and they are taking the unprecedented step of developing a system to gather, assimilate, and convey to the church a process for listening to your call for a new day. They are also seriously considering committing part of next June's assembly in Portland to help us make some decisions. The NEXT Church and the Presbyterian Mission Agency also are doing survey work to determine future directions. Accompanying this letter is the COGA initiative to hear from the denomination.

In order to emerge as a healthy, vital denomination we need to hear from you concerning your own hopes, visions, and concerns about the PC(USA). Each congregation, each organization, each presbytery, each advocacy group, each individual member is critical to providing the kind of input that can help us deal with the realities we are facing in ways that might enable us to restore trust, be transparent, and most of all be faithful to the Lord and Savior we all adore and whom we wish to serve.

Do not respond just one time. If you are on a session, or a committee, or in a group that is different from your local church, fill out one of these forms there too. As an individual, do the same while also participating in your presbytery's response or some other group. Because we will be coordinating the information rather than merely quantifying it, it does not skew the responses if you have input in a number of different ways. In fact, the more our voices are heard the better will be our understanding of reality as we offer information so commissioners can make responsible decisions.

Please trust the process one more time. Please participate. If you don't, we may not hear some very important facts or opinions that need to be placed on the table. Many people feel that God is giving us a Kairos moment. But it is up to us to accept it and do something with it.

My Call to the Church is on video at bit.ly/1LLPqWf, and in print at pcusa.org/calltothechurch. Our moment in time is now. We do not have the luxury to discern and debate these matters for years. Our membership and our world are saying we need to get our act together in new and important ways right now.

I have more hope and faith than I ever have that God is leading our church. God is calling the church to be a community formed, shaped, and led by the Risen Christ. You are key in helping us decide how that can happen. With God's help we have the opportunity to be a witness and force for Jesus Christ in ways beyond our imagination.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for participating, and please join me in intentional prayer as we seek God's will and guidance through these critical endeavors.

With gratitude for your love of the church,

Heath

Heath K. Rada

Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014)



Call to Prayer After Terrorist Attacks in Paris, Beirut, and Baghdad

November 13, 2015

God of mercy, whose presence sustains us in every circumstance,
in the midst of unfolding violence and the aftermath of terror and loss,
we seek the grounding power of your love and compassion. ♦

In these days of fearful danger and division, we need to believe somehow that your kingdom of peace in which all nations and tribes and languages dwell together in peace is still a possibility.

Give us hope and courage that we may not yield our humanity to fear., even in these endless days of dwelling in the valley of the shadow of death.

We pray for neighbors in Paris, in Beirut, in Baghdad, who, in the midst of the grace of ordinary life--while at work, or at play, have been violently assaulted, their lives cut off without mercy.

We are hostages of fear, caught in an escalating cycle of violence whose end can not be seen.

We open our hearts in anger, sorrow and hope: that those who have been spared as well as those whose lives are changed forever may find solace, sustenance, and strength in the days of recovery and reflection that come. We give thanks for strangers who comfort the wounded and who welcome stranded strangers, for first responders who run toward the sound of gunfire and into the smoke and fire of bombing sites.

Once again, Holy One, we cry, how long, O Lord? We seek forgiveness for the ways in which we have tolerated enmity and endured cultures of violence with weary resignation. We grieve the continued erosion of the fabric of our common life, the reality of fear that warps the common good. We pray in grief, remembering the lives that have been lost and maimed, in body or spirit.

We ask for sustaining courage for those who are suffering; wisdom and diligence among global and national agencies and individuals assessing threat and directing relief efforts; and for our anger and sorrow to unite in service to the establishment of a reign of peace, where the lion and the lamb may dwell together, and terror will not hold sway over our common life.

In these days of shock and sorrow, open our eyes, our hearts, and our hands to the movements of your Spirit, who flows in us like the river whose streams makes glad the city of God, and the hearts of all who dwell in it, and in You.

In the name of Christ, our healer and our Light, we pray, Amen.

*—Prayer by the Rev. Dr. Laurie Ann Kraus
Coordinator, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance*