

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT

JP Carlson, Minister Commissioner to the 226 General Assembly

I was a part of the ecumenical & interfaith committee. Our discernment was put to the test when weighing the desire to be in relationship with migrant Presbyterian communities with traditional views on sexuality while attending to the concerns of LGBTQIA+ advocates. The committee was able to find middle ground on most issues, honoring our sisters & brothers in Christ from other countries and providing clear advocacy for our friends in the LGBTQIA+ community. This matter will require ongoing intentional and respectful conversations as we nurture existing relationships with our friends from abroad and build new ones.

One of the votes that stuck out to me during the assembly pertained to divestment from fossil fuel companies. At first, the decision to divest seemed straightforward. The majority of the assembly and almost all of the youth delegates were for divestment. When it became clear that divestment meant losing our seat at the table and thus forfeiting our influence on decision making, the assembly reconsidered the initial vote & decided not to divest.

On a personal note, I thoroughly enjoyed worshiping at a nearby congregation on Sunday morning. The worship was Christ-centered and uplifting. We got a chance to hear about a community garden ministry over lunch and visit the garden afterward. It was fun to catch up with a classmate from my seminary days as well.

Finally, the recognition of several new PCUSA seminary presidents in the last several years gave the entire assembly reason to be hopeful for the next generation of clergy. The creativity & quality displayed by these presidents and the willingness to adapt to major cultural changes stood out. I am eager to see how their presidencies shape the future of our denomination.