

ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

Saturday, August 19, 2023 Stated ONSITE Assembly
The Wild Animal Sanctuary, Keenesburg, Colorado

Welcome to the Wild Animal Sanctuary

Moderator John Yu welcomed over 80 people to the Presbytery Assembly. The staff of the Wild Animal Sanctuary spoke of the history of the Sanctuary and we watched a welcome video about the vision and values of this amazing place. The Assembly was able to explore the Wild Animal Sanctuary for an hour before the business of the Assembly began observing the animals including tigers, bobcats, and lions.

Opening Worship/Dee Cooper and Assembly Members

Our worship was cultivated by our Lead Presbyter Dee Cooper with an invitation to rest, restore, recreate, reflect, and ponder how we can create sanctuary by allowing love to show us how to create a sanctuary for all. Members of the Assembly were invited to participate in the Call To Worship and to watch and listen to the music video of [Sanctuary](#) by Boulder singer songwriter Rebbeca Folsom.

Land Acknowledgement | Candice Sweet

We welcomed the Stated Clerk for Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Candice Sweet who spoke briefly about the General Assembly in 2024 in Salt lake City. Candice is also the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Utah. She led us in our land Acknowledgement for the day.

Welcome to our New Minister Members /Ministry Relations Committee

Sheri Fry and Sandy Safford introduced and welcomed our new minister members, Michelle Fincher, Pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church and Karla Lara Maldonado, our New Worshiping Community Incubator Leader, to the Assembly. They were asked to share one thing about themselves that is not in the Assembly Packet and what their favorite animal is and why. We blessed them and their ministry in our midst. Welcome Michelle and Karla!

Voting at Assembly | John Yu

Voting was a little different and in the spirit of our assembly location. The Assembly was asked to vote using animal voices. There was a lot of buzzing like bees, roaring like lions and tigers, and howling like wolves.



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Omnibus Motion | Pat Queen

The Omnibus passed. Congratulations to Community of Grace and the approval to sell the house formerly owned by Arvada Presbyterian Church.

Agency Review Task Force/Visionary Leadership Commission | Rob Habiger

Rob thanked the existing committees that continue to do their ministry as the new structure is built and until new committees are populated and equipped. Congratulations to Louise Westfall who was elected as the newest member of the Servant Leadership Development Committee.

Ministry Relations Committee | Sheri Fry

Candidate Kiersten Hill, who is the newly called Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Wellshire Presbyterian Church was examined by the Assembly for Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. After questions and discussion, including one about her favorite Taylor Swift song that describes her faith journey, she was enthusiastically approved for ordination to her call. She will be ordained and installed on September 17, 2023. A joyous day for Kiersten, Wellshire Presbyterian Church, and the Presbytery. Moderator of Committee on Preparation, Chris Spotts offered a prayer of thanksgiving for Kiersten and her ministry.

Scripture, Sermon, and Exploration in the spirit of Terra Divina | Dee Cooper

Worship continued with a sermon and scripture from the book of Job. Dee reminded us of Job and how in the midst of deepest despair he was invited to learn, seek and ask from the animals. She shared that the animals had a great deal to teach us about taking risks into new ecosystems and structures and she invited us to go out among the animals in the spirit of *Terra Divina* which is a *divine conversation with co-created beings and creation*. The Assembly had time to go back outside among the animals- to wander, explore, observe, listen, imagine with curiosity, wonder, pray, ponder, and reflect about what we can learn from the animals about ourselves, our creation, our creator, and our call.

Time of Engagement | John Yu

Moderator John Yu invited the assembly to think about what transpired in this sacred time among the animals. The assembly pondered the following questions. *What were some things that were heard, observed, and learned through these experiences? How has God challenged you in these moments? How is God speaking to you through these animals, through nature, and through one another? How have you been challenged?* John invited each individual to consider writing a letter to themselves about where God



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may be speaking to them. The letters will be mailed back to folks in the coming weeks. He also invited each participant to consider the 8 values of the Presbytery. Each person was given 3 animal stickers to place upon the values they believe God is telling the Presbytery to focus on.

Servant Leadership Development Committee (Committee on Representation) | Nancy Dixon

The Servant leadership Committee brought forth 3 motions with individuals willing and called to serve in various capacities. Servant Leadership development Committee Moderator Nancy Dixon shared that there were many prayerful conversations to bring about these motions. All the motions passed. There was a nomination from the floor to elect a Commissioner Teaching Elder Alternate to the slate for General Assembly Commissioners.

Congratulations to Cleve Dixon (class of 2024), Martin Cobb (class of 2024), C.J. Biewenga (class of 2025), Bruce Taylor (class of 2025) who were elected to serve on the Ministry Preparation Committee.

Congratulations to the Commissioners Elected to the 226th General Assembly.
Commissioner Ruling Elder: Jeff Sneddon (Church of the Eternal Hills), Commissioner Ruling Elder Alternate: Diane Ritzdorf (Calvary Presbyterian Church), Commissioner Teaching Elder: Bill Sanders (Honorably Retired), Commissioner Teaching Elder Alternate: Bethany Peerbolte (NWC Incubator Leader)

Congratulations to Ruth McCollum Huff (Teaching Elder) who was elected as the Vice Moderator of the Presbytery Assembly for 2024!

Thank You Servant Leadership Development Committee for your incredible work!

Treasurer Report | Sue Pilcher

Our treasurer gave a brief oral report based on the financial documents in the Assembly Packet.

Ministry Relations Committee | Sandy Safford

Candidate Amanda Osenga, who is the newly called Associate Pastor for Youth and Families at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church was examined by the Assembly for Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Amanda has served the Presbytery on the Cultivation and Innovation Work Group. After questions and



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discussion, she was enthusiastically approved for ordination to her call. She will be ordained and installed on October 8, 2023. A joyous day for Amanda, Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, and the Presbytery. Sandy Safford offered a prayer of thanksgiving for Amanda and her ministry. Congratulations Amanda!

Assembly was adjourned with the sound of bells from the Assembly body and blessings from Presbytery Moderator John Yu.

It was an incredible day with vision and planning from our staff and leadership.

