

## General Assembly Report

I served as the Young Adult Advisory Delegate for our wonderful Presbytery at this year's General Assembly. When I was first asked if I would like to attend General Assembly, I thought, "Cool, a trip to Minneapolis!" I never thought it would be one of the most moving and difficult experiences of my life. The worship services were amazing and the YAAD gatherings were phenomenal. I met so many new friends and even saw some familiar faces. It really is a small Presbyterian world.

As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I met four other YAADs. I was amazed at how easy it was to tell who were YAADs and who were just normal kids at the hotel. Once I arrived, I could tell that Minneapolis had been overrun with Presbyterians. All of us had on our classy nametag purses, and we looked good. It wasn't long before we figured out that you couldn't go anywhere in the convention center without our handy dandy nametags.

Before plenary, everyone met with their respective committees. My committee, church orders and ministry, decided to meet in a different way. Instead of sitting with all of us in rows facing the front, we sat at 6 different round tables. Because of this set up, I felt like I was really able to get to know the people sitting at my table and I was also comfortable talking with them about the touchy subjects we were asked to deal with. During committee meetings, I was challenged, reassured, and questioned on where I stood with the different issues. There were many times when we would be given a small break and I just wanted to leave the room and cry because I could see and understand all perspectives but I was not sure which perspective made the most sense to me. I heard some 70 people talk and each one of those people was just as passionate about the issue as the person before and after them. This made making a decision hard because I could see either way being successful at first. I had to do a lot of praying and listening before I was ready to make a decision.

After each day, all of the YAADs would get together and debrief about the day. We had an opportunity to talk with one another about some of the things that bothered us throughout the day, and some of the things that made us smile too. During these gatherings, we decided that it would not be a bad idea to do a few energizers before we got too deep because it was always late and we were tired. To my astonishment, most people in the room did not know what an energizer was. I was shocked. I was also amazed to learn that there were so many more than the ones that I knew. I think my favorite memory from GA is when 10 other YAADs and I stayed up later than we should have learning and doing energizers with people from all over the country. It was great to bond over silly dance moves and funny faces.

While I was in Minneapolis, I came across many different accents and was even complimented on my own. I say this because it was amazing to see Presbyterians from all across the country come together in order to make our church more like the church that God wants it to be. The people that I met are people that I hope to keep in touch with now that we have all gone our own separate ways and paths. I learned to always have an open mind and to be ready to listen to everyone's viewpoint before coming to any conclusions. I am glad I was able to go to General Assembly as the YAAD from our presbytery. I would strongly recommend this experience.