

# ADDENDUM GP-3

## General Presbyter's Report July 27, 2010

“Out of the believer’s hearts flowed streams of living water” was scripture we heard at General Assembly during worship, and often during the day, as a call to prayer. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that “he could give living water.”

Our theology says that we believe that the Holy Spirit works through our General Assembly. It is for that reason that we ask delegates to go with an open mind and heart to listen for God’s voice. Most delegates did try to listen to God’s voice. For me, there were times when I saw the work of the Holy Spirit in powerful and surprising ways. The Spirit’s power was manifested in the ways that people listened to each other and worked with each other across all kinds of artificial boundaries. I think the Spirit used times of worship and prayer as ways to help that happen. There were other times where I looked through a glass dimly. However, I believe that God is working through our General Assembly and in our denomination. Yet, in this Assembly that dealt with so many large issues, few, if any, will agree with all that was done. Some will be happy and others will be sad. It is then our responsibility to try to listen to God and weigh the issues carefully. Often, we only see God’s hand at work fully when we look back after several years.

Our polity is such that the General Assembly is usually but one step in our discernment of God’s direction. Unfortunately, we do not have the concentrated times of worship, prayer, listening to each other and to God. We come from our busy lives and our established positions and understandings and do not have the time or opportunities to listen, pray and worship together over a period of time. This means that we need to work hard and differently. Because some of the decisions the presbyteries make are important for our life together and for how people feel about being part of this body we call PCUSA, our discernment is very important.

As a Presbytery, we are going to try to find times to talk about what General Assembly did and about the issues on which we will vote. However, we all need to look for more creative ways to dialogue and listen, if we are going to be open to listening to God and to each other. I ask you to help us look for those ways and to take advantage of opportunities to do this in your area. Some of your ideas and our ideas may not work perfectly, but let us try to risk with the Spirit.

After a controversial vote at Presbytery, one pastor in this Presbytery called another pastor he respected who had voted opposite on a critical vote. They talked and listened to one other. Their understanding of each others position and pain grew. They may not have changed their mind on where they stood, but they had a greater appreciation and understanding of the other’s perspective.

I am also hoping that our October two-day Presbytery meeting will give us an opportunity to informally talk and listen. We have asked John McCall to preach and be a keynote speaker/ workshop leader on the topic of making disciples and growing spiritually. I hope that as we worship, pray and do Bible study together, we will sense the working of the Spirit. In addition, Becca Young will be home to share her ministry of teaching at a seminary in the Muslim country of Indonesia.

I look forward to our dialogues about General Assembly and also our discussions of how God is active in our midst, helping us reach out to our community and the world in the name of Jesus. I remain confident that the Holy Spirit is working among us and with us.