



Host Committee Post-Assembly Report
49th PCA General Assembly
June 20 – June 24, 2022
Birmingham, Alabama

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Host Committee Co-Chairmen's Report

Preface:

I will say on the onset that the work of our committee was unique in a lot of ways. I will do my best to communicate what worked for us and what we found to be a challenge. However, it is my sincere hope that much of what we endured you will not have to go through. I will also note the irregularities that our committee experienced may not be the best help to those going forward, but I am sure that there will be some overlap that you will find useful.

Background:

We began our work as a committee back in 2018 when the presbytery agreed to as a presbytery to hold GA in Birmingham in 2020. The first decision of the presbytery was to appoint two chairmen to the host committee. The hope was to have one RE and one TE for a good division of labor and point of view. RE Taylor Denard and TE Daniel Leavengood were appointed to be the co-chairs of the Host Committee. The presbytery then empowered Taylor and myself to appoint the subcommittee chairs to each committee. The only exception was the worship committee chairs. The presbytery believed that the worship of the General Assembly is one of the most important events that take place during the Assembly and therefore that Subcommittee chair would be voted on by the presbytery as a whole.

Theme:

We determined the theme even before we have the full committee rounded out. We were concerned with having too many cooks in the kitchen and getting bogged down with the process of picking a theme and so we limited those who would be included in this process. We reached out to a limited number of the Host Committee, but it wasn't until we talked with the AC and the representative they had making the graphics that we really started to narrow things down. We wanted to tie our theme with the city and this led us to thinking about the iron and steel industry. We moved to verses that talk about being refined by fire. Our first suggestion for a theme was Purified by Fire, which through others suggestions would eventually become Purified to Proclaim. We then worked with the AC to produce a logo and graphics for the event.

Organization:

It was very important to us that we as the chairs did not micromanage our team. We wanted to select chairs that would be self-starters and would keep on task. Our goal as chairs was simply to facilitate their work, mediate with the AC office in Atlanta, and help them work through any problems that might arise. I would say that one of the major rolls you need to fill is the Family subcommittee chair. Under that chairperson falls all the family and woman's subcommittees. However, all the committees were really important and it was crucial to find people who could fulfill those roles. We reached out to the presbytery and individual ministers to find those people who would help us in our work.

Sub Committee	Committee Chair
Finance Subcommittee	RE Charles Woodall, Briarwood
Prayer Subcommittee	TE Chris Peters, Cross Creek Church
Volunteer Coordination Subcommittee	TE Tom Patton, Oak Mountain
Host Housing and Attendee Needs Subcommittee	TE Max Bunn Brairwood
Local Transportation Subcommittee	TE Chad Walker, Oak Mountain
Worship Subcommittee	TE Steve Whitner and TE David Driskill
Worship Subcommittee: Communion Team	TE Max Bunn Brairwood
Worship Subcommittee: Usher Team	David Allen
Families Subcommittee	TE Bobby Parks, Brairwood
Families Subcommittee: Family Registration Team	Evan Travers
Families Subcommittee: Women's Events Team	Donna Evans
Families Subcommittee: Women's Tours and Activities	Cindy Ball
Families Subcommittee: Hospitality Team	Kristie Harrick
Families Subcommittee: Children's Activities Team	TE Jason Ellerbee
Families Subcommittee: Nursery Team	Jamie Bennett
AC Meeting Planner	Amanda Burton

Meetings:

Our meeting schedule is likely to look very different from other Host Committees. We did the majority of the work back in 2020. We had gotten through that all important October deadline and were able to

carry that over after the 2020 Assembly was canceled. Our goal was never to meet a set number of times, but to meet as often as was needed. This meant that in month leading up to GA we only met about once a month and the month of GA we meet about once a week. Prior to 2020 we did all our meetings in person, but in 2022 we did many of our meetings via Zoom. This was particularly helpful when the gas prices started to climb in the summer of 2022. I would recommend not trying to force meetings, but to get a good sense of what it needed and meet accordingly.

Finance Subcommittee Report

The objective of the Finance Subcommittee was the management and oversight of all financial aspects of the General Assembly including preparation of an overall budget, planning for receipt and deposit of funds, payment of expenses, keeping detailed financial records, preparing financial reports, and reporting periodically to the Presbytery.

Organization and responsibilities:

Chairman - Charles Woodall

- Assisting each subcommittee in establishing their budgets for approval by Host Committee
- Monitoring income, expenses, and budget variances
- Paying bills as approved by subcommittee chairmen
- Preparation of periodic and final financial reports
- Assisting in management of other issues not assigned to other subcommittees
- Counting & deposit of offerings from worship services

George Hodges – Treasurer, Evangel Presbytery

- Receiving and depositing all contributions
- Monitoring all expense payments
- Assist in periodic GA financial reporting
- “Another set of eyes”

Karl Poythress, CPA – Bookkeeper, Evangel Presbytery

- Reconciliation of bank accounts
- Preparation of Presbytery financial reports
- “Another set of eyes”

High-level Planning:

1. When hosting GA was initially approved by the Presbytery, the five largest churches in the Presbytery pledged to contribute over a three-year period an amount equal to their annual contribution to the Presbytery (\$9.00 per member requested). This would be sufficient to cover the anticipated budget. Churches were asked to budget annually for their GA contribution.
2. Assist each subcommittee in development of budgets. Each subcommittee should review reports of several previous GA Host Committees to assist in establishing their budgets. There is no “one right way” to do it. The organization of the Host Committee may vary depending upon the skills and experience of Host Committee members, and the environment surrounding the meeting facilities, hotels, transportation, parking, etc. Previous GAs had sizable budgets for an Administrative Assistant, Communication, and Prayer, for which we initially budgeted. However, we spent very little in these categories, and later shifted those budgeted amounts to Contingencies under the Host Committee. A Contingency line item should be established for each subcommittee. There are always unforeseen needs.
3. It is recommended to open or dedicate a separate checking account for GA. Going in, our Presbytery had a checking account and a money market account for investment of

excess funds, so we segregated GA funds in the money market account. We had a large supply of checks for our checking account, so we planned to use them for GA expenses, and make periodic transfers to settle up. In retrospect, it would have been much better to have a separate checking account dedicated to GA.

4. Establishment of procedure, documentation, form, and approval requirements for requesting payment of bills or expense reimbursements.

Activities:

1. We considered using QuickBooks, but decided against it due to the steep learning curve and the short period of time that it would really be beneficial. We chose to use Excel spreadsheets for recordkeeping and reporting, including the Budget, Funds Received, Women/Family Registration Fees, Expense Ledger, and an Income/Expense/Budget Summary. Using software such as QuickBooks should definitely be considered, and selecting a Finance Chair with QuickBooks experience would be a definite plus.
2. The most complex areas for budgeting and expense tracking were women's tours and youth activities due the number of events. Complicating factors in the women/family area were the difficulties encountered in breaking out manual registrations, credit card fees and refunds by activity category. It was very important for us to have one member of the Host Committee responsible for coordinating with the chairmen of all Women and Family activities. Bobby Parks did an excellent job in this roll.
3. The chairman of the Finance Subcommittee wrote, signed, mailed or delivered almost all GA expense checks, based on requisitions or email requests by other subcommittee chairmen that were within their approved budgets and backed up by receipts or signed contracts. All transactions were under the oversight of the Treasurer of the Presbytery. Ideally, more separation of responsibilities would be advisable.
4. Assured timely deposit of all incoming funds, and monitored status of the fundraising effort.
5. Participation in monthly reconciliation of bank accounts and financial reports.
6. Establishment of relationship with Tithe.ly for on-line contributions and "Text-to-Give" during GA worship services and run test transactions.
7. Solicitation of bids and acquisition of general liability insurance coverage for Presbytery-sponsored women/family activities.
8. Established procedures and recruited a team for counting offerings.
9. On-site, I had a supply of checks and petty cash, but did not need either one. Beforehand, we had written checks for honoraria, musicians, etc., obtained cash for bus driver tips, and gave them to subcommittee chairs for distribution. This alleviated the need for last minute check-writing and cash distribution.
10. Expenses for the Finance Subcommittee were nominal, about \$50 for stamps and paper supplies.

Offerings

Since the Host Committee was confident that the GA funds raised would be sufficient to cover GA expenses, we decided early on to contribute the offerings collected during the worship services to Urban Hope Development, a ministry of Urban Hope Community Church in Evangel Presbytery. This was announced at GA and was included in slides as well.

We counted the offerings and prepared deposit slips each night in the PCA Administrative Committee Office, which was very convenient to the rear of the assembly hall. A few weeks before GA, we gathered the supplies we would need for handling the offerings, bank bags or

envelopes for storage and deposit of offerings, deposit slips, endorsement stamp, deposit worksheet, rubber bands, binder clips, etc. **If at all possible, borrow a cash counter. It will save tons of time!**

We arranged with the host hotel across the street from the assembly hall for a safe deposit box in the hotel lobby to keep the offering bags/envelops until Friday morning when we made our deposit. We found this to be much easier and safer than making a deposit each night using the night deposit, and returning to the bank the next day to settle up. We had a Birmingham police officer on site usually during the counting who accompanied me to the safe deposit box at the hotel.

We used on-line giving services provided by Tithe.ly with their “Text-to-Give” option. This was highly recommended by the previous Host Committee (St. Louis), who had received approximately \$4,000 of offerings through that method. We were very disappointed that we received only \$736 through Tithe.ly. This was probably due to inadequate communication. We had a brief announcement the first night, and an AV slide that only showed briefly a the start of the offering collections. We recommend publicizing thoroughly and tastefully, and including instructions in the worship folders. We were also surprised that we received very few coins and only eight checks all week. Offerings were as follows:

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Total
Currency	\$10,348.00	\$4,079.00	\$4,082	\$18,509.00
Coin	6.19		1.70	7.89
Checks	20.00	275.00	170.00	465.00
Tithe.ly			736.61	
Total	\$10,374.19	\$4,354.00	\$4,989.31	\$19,717.50

Financial Summary

The Lord richly blessed GA2022 financially in several ways!

- Contributions from Evangel churches were higher than anticipated.
- Generous contributions from other presbyteries beginning in 2020
- Excellent expense management in Women/Family area
- Generous worship offerings

With our funds surplus we were blessed to be able to:

1. make an additional contribution to Urban Hope Development beyond the worship offerings;
2. pass along to GA 2023 a higher amount than anticipated; and
3. retain a substantial amount in Presbytery funds for future projects and needs, such as church planting, etc.

There were several unexpected expense issues:

- Due to host hotel issues, many commissioners had to book other local hotels. We were encouraged by the PCA to contract for shuttle busses to assist with the daily transportation needs of commissioners in other hotels.

- We decided to provide volunteer parking by renting a designated parking lot, providing parking passes, and hiring a security guard for safety and to control access.
- We were not aware until early May of the need for general liability insurance coverage (personal injury, sexual misconduct, etc.) for GA events planned and hosted by the Host Presbytery, especially involving the youth. We obtained quotes from our existing insurance agent and the local agent for Brotherhood Mutual. This was a very laborious process for someone who knew very little about insurance. We were finally able to get general liability coverage at the last minute specifically for our GA events at a very reasonable premium through Brotherhood Mutual. We recommend that PCA Admin consider:
 - a. Giving guidance to Presbyteries hosting GAs early on about the need for general liability insurance for Presbytery-hosted events, and
 - b. Clarifying guidance if necessary to all Presbyteries about the recommended types of insurance coverage.
- With our expected budget surplus, we were able to cover hotel room expenses for several Host Committee members. Policy in this area needs to be determined and understood early on.

SUMMARY OF INCOME, EXPENSES & BUDGET

	Income	Expenses	Net Inc (Exp)	Budget
Evangel Churches	81,066		81,066	76,500
TEs	2,520		2,520	
Other Presbyteries	15,000		15,000	
TOTAL SUPPORT	98,586		98,586	
Women/Family	16,706	(26,834)	(10,128)	18,000
Worship		(17,099)	(17,099)	16,000
Prayer		0		1,200
Transportation		(18,820)	(18,820)	20,000
Host Committee		(13,935)	(13,935)	27,000
SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	16,706	(76,687)	(59,981)	82,200
TOTAL OP INCOME (EXPENSE)	115,292	(76,687)	38,605	

Urban Hope- Offerings(Contrib)	19,493	(30,000)	(10,507)	
Pay It Forward to GA 2023		(10,000)	(10,000)	
FINAL INCOME & EXPENSES	134,785	(116,687)	\$18,098	SURPLUS

Host Committee Expenses

GA 2019 Expenses for Host Committee Co-chairmen	\$ 2,282
Administrative Expenses	185
Zoom Subscription Fees	195
GA Scholarship	250
Liability Insurance	388
Volunteer Parking Reimbursement	10
Hotel Rooms – Host Committee	4,722
Volunteer Parking Lot & Security	2,508
Host Committee “Thank You” Dinner	3,395
TOTAL	\$13,936

Prayer Subcommittee

2022 PCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRAYER TEAM

1. “REMOTE” Pray-ers - Those willing to receive an email about once a month, with the names of those registered for the assembly, and committed to pray by name for these men, their families and the churches they represent. As well as other general prayer requests for the Assembly.
2. “ON-SITE” Pray-ers - Those prepared to engage in small group prayer during the week of general assembly, at BJCC, to pray for needs submitted by the app or by the prayer box. Everyone can take a couple 1-hour shifts during the 3 days
3. “EVENT” Pray-ers - Those willing to attend or help organize/lead the large Pre-Assembly Prayer event. Held in a large meeting room at BJCC, during the assembly week. Tue, June 21 at 4:30-5:15 pm at BJCC.

Many of those already committed to the “team” met last month for planning and prayer, representing 7-8 churches. We hope to have even more at an upcoming meeting – Date/Time TBD.

To promote the prayer subcommittee, I called or texted every pastor in our presbytery and around February, asking them to send me names or send my name to anyone in their church who might want to help in any one of the 3 components of this prayer effort. In February I started to have monthly meetings with a “team” representing each church. And then of course as the week of GA approach we include the hourly prayer slots in the overall signup for Wed and Thu 9-6 pm.

General Assembly 2022 – Prayer Guide

1. For safety in travel for all commissioners
2. For strength and wisdom for those leading in any facet of the assembly
3. For the equipping seminars and discussions
4. For the three main worship services
5. For the business of the assembly – Including updates from our Agencies and voting on overtures
6. For the fellowship among pastors, elders, PCA members and others who will attend
7. For fidelity and unity in decisions made
8. For Holy Spirit to move in our midst
9. For encouragement to any attending who are struggling
10. For the children and youth ministries during the week
11. For physical and spiritual protection for all during the week
12. For the BJCC workers and all those serving us at hotels and restaurants
13. For the Triune God to be glorified and enjoyed in all.

We worked with the AC office in Atlanta to get the pre-assembly prayer meeting scheduled on Tuesday afternoon. Participation was strong in everything but the pre-assembly prayer. I know when I have been to GA I have rarely attended it myself so I am not throwing stones, but there may have been 50 people there and at least ½ were basically people from my own church or fellow pastor friends of mine that I invited. We did have some great prayer warriors there and I’m glad we did it.

2022 Birmingham General Assembly

Volunteer Subcommittee Report

Scope

According to the GA Planning handbook, the volunteer subcommittee is responsible for only a handful of needs. These include move-in team, network set-up team, tote bag team, ask-me guides, and move-out team.

In conferring with the other Host Committee team members, there was the expectation that the Volunteer subcommittee would help raise up volunteers for ushers, communion element prep team, elders to serve communion, host homes, women's hospitality room greeters, children's ministry helpers – elementary and youth, and prayer teams.

The original list from the GA Planning handbook called for less than 100 volunteers. Once all included, there were approximately 575 volunteers needed!

Preparation

1) Signup.com

One of the most significant ways to prepare was to open a Signup.com account. I was able to set up each task with the proper date, number of volunteers needed for each slot, and the time-frame needed.

That made an overwhelming number of volunteer options & people much more manageable.

2) Advertising piece

About 6-months out, I copied what St. Louis had done with a Powerpoint slide that listed the various needs and provided a QR code that took folks directly to the Signup site. We used it at presbytery meetings to allow pastors and elders to preview sign-up options. Then, it was sent to each church in the presbytery to use at the local level. (See Addendum # 2)

3) Pressed out, regularly

After sending communication piece out 6-months prior to GA, we began a full-court press getting the sign-up info out to churches on a ever increasing rate beginning 4-months prior. At that point we challenged/encouraged churches/pastors/elders to push the info from congregational level communication to Sunday school classes, small groups, etc.

4) Identify team leaders and co-leaders

I think one of the key points that made things work fairly smoothly was to find and identify day captains/co-captains, and team leads/co-leaders for each function.

For each of our prep teams (Sat move-in, tote bag, and Sun move-in), I tapped at least one person to serve as team lead or coordinator. That allowed me to coordinate with one person to explain where to meet and the role their team would play.

Then, that team leader could communicate with each member of his/her team concerning details about where to meet, parking, equipment or supplies to bring, etc.

We did the same with the "Ask Me" guides. And, we had Day Captains and co-captains who could train and place volunteers as they arrived.

In retrospect, I believe that there should be a Volunteer Coordination team. In the end, I did recruit an assistant to help me but could have used that person earlier. That person could have helped send regular updates to each team leader listing volunteer sign-ups and up-to-date info. The Day Captain/co-captain model was essential. I also think it would have been better to have a 4-"man" team for each day instead of just 2.

(for detailed instructions, see addenda)

5) Nametags

I found out the week before GA began that our Volunteer subcommittee was responsible to provide all volunteers with nametags. The GA coordinator provided the lanyards but we need to produce nametags for all volunteers.

Debrief Notes:

1) Host Committee Office

The Host Committee was provided an office location that was very helpful for staging/training/refreshment. However, it was on one end of the convention center and the Clerk's office was at the other end of the convention center.

Ideally, they should be much closer together.

2) Saturday Move-in team

The GA Handbook calls for 12 volunteers to unload on Saturday morning from 9-11am.

I think it would be best to increase that number to 15 and to make the time from 9-11:30am.

Also, volunteers should have been encouraged to bring gloves, and hand-trucks or dollies.

We also should have had a case of waters to share with the move-in team and the tote bag team.

3) Saturday am Tote Bag team

The GA Handbook mistakenly called for 20 tote bag team volunteers. That was way too few!

The time listed is 10am to noon. Our team didn't finish until 4pm.

We recommend increasing that number of volunteers to 35 and making the time-frame from 10:30am – 2:30pm.

The tote bag team could not begin their work until the truck was fully unloaded and the tote bag materials had been sorted. That is the reason for suggesting a slightly later start and finishing up a bit later.

Lunch or snacks and water need to be provided.

(One of our volunteers from this year recommended using 3 overlapping shifts of 20 people in each shift. For example, team # 1 from 10:30-12:30, team # 2 from noon-2pm, and team # 3 from 1:30-3:30. Thought that suggestion had some merit.)

4) Sunday afternoon Bookstore & Media Truck Move-in team

This seemed like a herculean task. However, the Bookstore/Media team had things well organized and the team finished in only 1-hour! But, they said that really needed all 10 people for that whole time. Might be good to beef up the team to 12 people.

Just a reminder to encourage helpers to bring gloves, and hand-trucks/dollies.

Be sure to provide waters.

5) "Ask Me" Guides

I developed a series of instructions or "training" materials for each "Ask Me" guide and email basic instructions about 3 weeks out and then much more specific instructions about 5 days before GA began. In retrospect, I should have sent the detailed instructions on Monday of the week BEFORE General Assembly!

I found that I was bombarded with questions. Many of the questions were because folks didn't read their email or access the attachments.

Most asked question by the volunteers was related to parking!

It was difficult to explain to volunteers where the Host Committee office was located and to get them there for a briefing before each shift.

a) Monday, 9am – noon shift

Most asked question – where can we find coffee.

b) Monday, Noon – 4pm shift

Where will General Assembly meet? Which way to the assembly hall?

c) Monday, 4pm – 7:45 shift

Recommend making that shift from 4pm – 6pm

d) Tuesday, all shifts

Again, most frequently asked questions related to coffee and the assembly hall.

Also, this is the day when families typically are arriving and "Ask Me" guides will need to know where Women's, Children, and Youth activities will be held and bus pick-up locations.

e) Wednesday & Thursday shifts

"Ask Me" guides needed locations for each of the special luncheons & dinners hosted by groups like RUF, MNA, MTW, RTS, etc. That information must be printed and given to the Day Captains by the AC Meeting Planner, Amanda Burton.

We also found that guides were not needed as much by noon on Thursday. I would recommend adjusting the number of needed guides to 6 for the Thursday, noon to 4pm slot and maybe only 4 for the later slot which I would adjust and make 4pm – 6pm on Thursday.

6) Move-out Team

The GA planning handbook gave me the impression that the Friday morning Move-out team might not be necessary if the assembly finished on Thursday evening. I was wrong.

There is a need for a full team of 12 people to help load the truck on Friday morning. The time for a full team could probably be adjusted to 9am – 12:30pm.

The Bookstore request at the last minute that we provide approximately 5 volunteers to help them pack up/load on Thursday evening! We were able to give them a couple of volunteers.

7) Communion Elders

Communion elders were moved off of the Sign-up document so that the worship team could better coordinate. But, I think it might have been better to keep all together but make sure that the Volunteer coordinator and admin are REGULARLY feeding the sign-up data to the communion team coordinator.

Submitted by Volunteer Coordinator, TE Tom Patton

Addenda

I. Sample Communication via Sign-up.com

GA22 Volunteers - Message from Tom Patton

Dear Tom Patton,

Email you sent regarding the activity "GA22 Volunteers" with the message:

<

Aaron, Billy, & Bruce,

Thank you so much for signing up to serve on the "Move-out" Team on Friday, June 24th for General Assembly -- our denomination will be much in your debt!

I wanted to touch bases to let you know that I will be back in touch with you closer to Assembly. I fully expect to have additional folks sign up. I plan to get back to the whole team with greater detail the week of the event.

Would one of you be willing to take point as the team "facilitator?" That would involve texting the team with any last minute details or being available if on Move-Out day someone needs to contact the group - that person would serve as the point-of-contact.

Again, thank you for your willingness to serve!

Every blessing--

Tom Patton

>

went to these participants:

Aaron Webb, 615-917-8194, aaron.webb@campusoutreach.org

Billy Ball, 205-401-1831, woballsouthern@gmail.com

Bruce Gresham, 281-433-2196, bruce.gresham@yahoo.com

II. Advertising Slides





III. Initial Communication with “Ask Me” Guides (sent 5/19)

2022 General Assembly Greeter-Guide Instructions

BJCC – Birmingham, AL

Volunteer Coordinator:

Tom Patton
205-531-2283

Greeter Day Captains:

Keisuke Idota (Mon & Wed)
828-417-2528
Co-captain – Michael Flayhart
Matthew Hutchens (Tues & Thurs)
336-803-1223
Co-captain – Carolyn Phillips

Our goal is to extend the welcome of Jesus to our General Assembly (GA) guests and to make everyone feel comfortable and confident as they find their way around the BJCC. Thank you for being our welcome team!

A volunteer orientation “guide” will be sent to each of you the week prior to Assembly. It will include a brief video with details about where to meet, pick up your name tag, apron, and visitor info materials. The 5 items that you will be provided will be a 1) map of the convention center, 2) a FAQ sheet to help with most frequently asked questions, 3) GA schedule, 4) seminar schedule, and 5) a quick reference guide to local services & restaurants. (In order to help orient you, we’ll provided an electronic copy of the GA Handbook & schedules with the informational email, too.)

~Before you leave home

- You'll want to dress comfortably since you'll be on your feet your entire shift (think "church casual" - jeans are ok but it will be warm if you have an afternoon-outdoor post).
- Eat a good meal (water bottles, coffee and snacks will also be available in the East Hall VIP Lounge – it overlooks the Exhibit Hall). That will be our volunteer break room and where you will get your apron, name tag, and info packet.
- Remember to bring a phone charger just in case.
- Leave early enough to give yourself plenty of time to park (if driving), go to check-in (East Hall VIP Lounge) and familiarize yourself with the "cheat sheets" you'll be given.
- NOTE: we will have free parking for volunteers and a parking pass will be emailed to you. Please print the parking pass off and display in your windshield. NOTE: the parking passes are for use only on the day of your service and because of limited spaces may not be shared with others!

~When you first arrive

- Check in to get your nametag, lanyard, and blue volunteer apron. You will check in with your Day Captain at the East Hall VIP Lounge. You'll then be directed to the spot you'll be assigned.
- You may store your belongings in the lounge but would encourage you to be careful with valuables – in both your car and in the lounge.

~Once you get to your spot

- Familiarize yourself with where you are in relation to the rest of the convention center.
- Look over the General Assembly Information Booklet (GAIB) and any 'cheat sheets' you're given at check in.
- Have the PCA General Assembly app pulled up on your phone for quick access
- Check the schedule to anticipate what events and locations people are likely to be looking for so you can direct them there
- Locate the nearest restroom (for yourself and anyone seeking them).
- In case of emergency, also locate the closest first aid station and direction to the public safety office, as well as closest exit. The public safety station is located in the common area just outside of the exhibit hall.

~During your shift

- Welcome and direct guests and volunteers to where they're trying to go.
- Most guests will have the same GAIB as you'll be given at check-in (with important schedules and maps). If possible, use their booklet to show them where to go and where the schedules are. For volunteers and guests without a booklet, use your own to help them. Note, you also will have an electronic version.
- If people have questions you can't answer or find answers for feel free to direct them to the information center at the Assembly Registration Desk.

- Your Day Captain will come by periodically to see if you need anything or if you need a restroom break. Don't hesitate to text or call if you need something (see phone numbers above)

~As your shift winds down

- Unless you're the last shift of the day the next volunteer will come to your spot to relieve you. Please pass on any helpful information to the next volunteer and then to your Day Captain when you return to where you checked in.

~Before and after your shift

- You are welcome to attend the worship services and observe any of the seminars, committee meetings and main business meetings.

Thank you for serving our church family in this important way!

IV. Follow-up Communication (sent 6/14)

**2022 General Assembly
Greeter-Guide Instructions
BJCC – Birmingham, AL**

Volunteer Coordinator:

Tom Patton
205-531-2283

Greeter-Guide Day Captains:

Keisuke Idota (Monday 6/20 & Wednesday 6/22)
828-417-2528

Co-captain – Michael Flayhart

Matthew Hutchens (Tuesday 6/21 & Thursday 6/23)
336-803-1223

Co-captain – Carolyn Phillips
334-300-4800

Our goal is to extend the welcome of Jesus to our General Assembly (GA) delegates and guests and to make everyone feel comfortable and confident as they find their way around the BJCC complex and various assembly functions. Thank you for being willing to serve the Lord as part of our welcome team!

This, and the attached documents, will serve as your volunteer orientation “guide.” It includes details about where to meet, pick up your name tag, apron, and visitor info materials. The 5 items that you will be provided will be a 1) map of the convention center, 2) a FAQ sheet to help with most frequently asked questions, 3) GA schedule, 4) seminar schedule, (#3 & 4 are found in the electronic copy of your Assembly handbook), and 5) a quick reference guide to local services & restaurants.

~Before you leave home

- You’ll want to dress comfortably since you’ll be on your feet your entire shift (think “church casual” - jeans are ok but Birmingham promises to be warm! I don’t think we have any volunteer stations outdoors).
- Eat a good meal (water bottles, coffee and snacks will also be available in the East Hall VIP Lounge – it overlooks the Exhibit Hall). That will be our volunteer break room and where you will meet up with your Day Captain to receive your apron, name tag, and info packet.
The BJCC complex is a bit complicated – and trying to describe the location via email is equally challenging! Please reference the attached BJCC map. If you enter building “F” and take the escalators up to the 3rd floor – following signs to the meeting rooms – you will find our lounge at the end of the hall on the left.
- Remember to bring a phone charger, just in case.
- Leave early enough to give yourself plenty of time to park (if driving), go to check-in (East Hall VIP Lounge) and familiarize yourself with the “cheat sheets” you’ll be given (and that are attached).
- NOTE: we have free parking for volunteers and a parking pass is attached. It is designated “Lot B/Future Parking Site on your map, immediately to the left of the Protective Stadium.
You can either print off the parking pass and display it on your dashboard or show the attached image to the parking attendant as you enter the lot.
The parking passes are for use only on the day of your service and because of limited spaces may not be shared with others!
Please **be aware**: the gate to the lot will be locked each evening. The times that the lot will be closed are as follows: Tues 9pm; Wed 7pm; Thurs 10pm.
- While you will be able to leave items in the lounge area, we highly recommend that you leave valuables at home and nothing of value in view in your car!

~When you first arrive

- Check in with your Day Captain at the East Hall VIP Lounge in order to get your nametag, lanyard, and blue volunteer apron. Your Day Captain will provide you with copies of the attached resources if needed (although, we’d recommend you having them available electronically. You’ll then be directed to the spot you’ll be assigned to serve as Greeter Guide for that shift.
- You may store your belongings in the lounge but would encourage you to be careful with valuables – both in your car and in the lounge.

~Once you get to your spot

- Familiarize yourself with where you are in relation to the rest of the convention center.

- Look over the General Assembly Information Booklet (GAIB) and any ‘cheat sheets’ you’re given at check in.
- Have the PCA General Assembly app pulled up on your phone for quick access.
- If you have a tablet that you’d like to use, you may find it most helpful to use for reference materials.
- Check the schedule to anticipate what events and locations people are likely to be looking for so you can direct them to that particular location.
- Locate the nearest restroom (for yourself and anyone seeking them).
- In case of emergency, also locate the closest first aid station and direction to the public safety office, as well as closest exit. The public safety station is located in the common area just outside of the exhibit hall.

~During your shift

- Welcome and direct guests and volunteers to where they’re trying to go.
- Most guests will have the same GAIB that you’ll receive (electronic copy attached) when you meet your Day Captain at check-in (with important schedules and maps). If possible, use their booklet to show them where to go and where the schedules are located. For volunteers and guests without a booklet, use your own to help them. Keep your electronic version handy.
- If people have questions you can’t answer or find answers, please feel free to direct them to the information center at the Assembly Registration Desk.
- Your Day Captain will come by periodically to see if you need anything or if you need a restroom break. Don’t hesitate to text or call if you need something (see phone numbers above)

~As your shift winds down

- Unless you’re the last shift of the day the next volunteer will come to your spot to relieve you. Please pass on any helpful information to the next volunteer and then to your Day Captain when you return your apron/name-tag/supplies to the lounge where you originally checked in.

~Before and after your shift

- You are welcome to attend the worship services and observe any of the seminars, committee meetings and main business meetings.

Thank you for serving Jesus and our church family in this important way!

V. Hospitality FAQ

GA22 Hospitality Guide Onsite FAQ

1. How do I get the GA smartphone app? What is the GA website? What	Download from the Apple or Google Play Store for your device. Main GA website is www.pcaga.org . Lots of current info. It also
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info does each have?	shows how to download the app.
2. Where is Registration and the Assembly Hall?	Registration will take place in the entrance of the Exhibit Hall which is located on the 2 nd floor of the East Exhibit Hall, building F on the BJCC map.
3. When and where are the events/meetings?	Most public meetings and room numbers are listed in the PCA GA web app, updated as needed. Also, in the GA info Book (GAIB), the business & worship schedule is on pages 10-11, pg.36 for women's events, pg.40-44 for family activities.
4. Who is speaking at an event?	Speakers in worship are introduced on page 29 of the GAIB and shown on the PCAGA website.
5. How do I find that event? Where is a map of the Convention Center?	See pages 12-13 in GAIB. Maps of BJCC are placed on walls and stands in various visible locations.
6. Where can I find food, snacks, coffee, other beverages?	Reference electronic restaurant guide
7. Where are the restrooms and elevators?	They are located along the hallways on both floors. The BJCC has signs pointing to nearest restrooms and stairs/elevators.
8. Where is the Lost & Found?	The Lost & Found is located at the information center
9. Where can I get first-aid or medical assistance?	Just outside of the Exhibit Hall
10. How do I get WIFI access?	WIFI access information is visibly posted in various spots around the BJCC.
11. How do I give online during the worship service? What is the text-to-give info?	Text-to-give info will be posted on screens before each worship service

VI. Day Captain's Responsibilities

General Assembly 2022 Day Captain Responsibilities

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a Volunteer Day Captain for this year's General Assembly. You are serving a vital role in helping not only our guests but also our volunteers feel connected, welcomed, appreciated and confident as they find their way around the BJCC Complex.

I hope this helps you understand your responsibilities and anticipate where we can help you in your role.

Volunteer Day Captain Responsibilities

Before General Assembly

1. **Familiarize yourself with the BJCC facilities** and meeting areas (please reference the map of the facilities that is attached).
2. **Familiarize yourself with the GA Information Brochure (GAIB – [link here](#))** to be able to help your volunteers as needed. A Printed copy will be provided on site.
3. **Download the GA app** (PCA GA) and become familiar with its format and what you will find information that is available through the app.
4. **Review the *Instructions for Greeter-Guides and Hospitality Volunteers*** handout and let me know what questions, additions or clarifications you think would be helpful to provide you and your volunteer team adequate information.
5. **Create an email and/or text group** for your volunteers, possibly by shifts, to communicate as needed. You may want to put volunteer email and phone information in your contacts for ease of last-minute communication.
6. **Communicate directly** with your volunteers the week before and day before your serving date, confirming their commitments and their understanding of responsibilities, particularly parking and transportation details. Respond to their questions as needed.
7. **Join us in praying** for all the details of GA this year, including the important matters being discussed and particularly finding volunteers for all of our needs this year.

Day of Service

1. Plan to arrive **15 minutes before** your first shift.
The rendezvous point for all greeters will be _____

That is where you will receive your team's name tags, aprons, maps, and any other materials they will need.

You will also want to wear a greeter apron and have your phone charged and your charger handy!

2. **Distribute** aprons, name tags, GA Brochures, and assign spots to each greeter-guide, helping them find their location on the Convention Complex map.
3. **Volunteers for other areas** (children's programs, nursery, youth, ushers) may need help signing in and getting to their locations. Please know you are not responsible for training or managing them - just become familiar with what is happening on your day, where things are happening and then help these other volunteers get there.
4. During each shift, **plan to circle around to each of your greeters** to check on their needs and for them to take a quick restroom break if necessary.
5. **BJCC volunteer floaters** – The BJCC has a number of volunteers who will also help as greeters and guides. While they are not associated with General Assembly, they will be a great resource as they are most familiar with the facilities. I'm still a bit unsure how many we'll have and when they will be serving but wanted you to be aware! If I receive more info on who will be available to serve each shift, I will let you know.
6. When the **next shift's volunteers** arrive, please send them to relieve the previous volunteer in the same spot. Send them to their location and ask them to get advice from one they're relieving to help them be more effective during their shift. Please ask volunteers who've finished their shift if there is anything we might do to better serve our volunteers and guests.
Make sure they leave their apron & badge at the Rendezvous table.

Following GA

1. **Follow-up** by thanking your volunteers for their ministry of hospitality. I also will follow-up with all the volunteers, as a combined group, possibly asking them for feedback on what worked and what might need tweaking next year.
2. **Send me your** thoughts on what was helpful and what we could have done better and I'll pass that on to the people organizing next year's GA in Memphis.

Thank you again for serving in this vital way. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or suggestions.

With gratitude,

Tom Patton

GA Volunteer Coordinator 2022

VII. Sample Parking Voucher



Host Housing/Special Needs Chair Report- Rev. Max Bunn

In my opinion this Chair position need has probably come to the time and place where it is no longer needed. Most people can find alternate housing through their own personal networks of people or by using the internet. I was still able to place 2 Teaching Elders and their wives with local church members. Both the hosts and the hosted reached out to me after GA to thank me and even sent pictures because they enjoyed their time together so much. So, I believe there is still some value in providing this if possible but probably not very strategic for one person.

As far as Special Needs go, I was able to help provide a vehicle for a family that had a child in the local hospital and needed to go back and forth from GA to the Hospital. The family was very grateful.

Local Transportation Subcommittee

2022 GA Worship Subcommittee Report

Overview

We made the decision to have co-chairs for the worship subcommittee. Steve Whitner was experienced in the area of music and administration. David Driskill was experienced in the area of liturgy formation and logistics. This turns out to be one of the best decisions that we made. Steve and Dave were able to work in areas where they were very comfortable and compliment each other very well. It also helped share the load between the co-chairs. This was especially important the week of GA. We established very early on some important objectives that we both wanted to pursue. We wanted the worship services at GA to look very familiar to what would be done in the churches of our presbytery and denomination. We recognize there is diversity within the PCA in regards to liturgy and music. We wanted to “throw fastballs down the middle” in everything that we did. We sought to make the worship services as non-polarizing as possible.

Approaches

Leadership of the worship subcommittee

- Dividing up responsibilities based on gifts of co-chairs.
 - o Steve: music
 - o Dave: liturgy, communion, ushering
- Recruiting the right people very early
 - o Chief musicians for every night
 - o Communion chair
 - o Ushering chair

Music

- Use a large representation from our presbytery.
 - o Appoint a chief musician for each night larger based on gifts and style.
 - o Each chief musician would develop his own team and choose songs, working alongside the worship subcommittee.
 - o Tuesday: choir and orchestra with focus on a more traditional worship style.
 - o Wednesday: 2 vocals with piano with focus on a simple, blended style.
 - o Thursday: modern praise team ensemble with focus on a RUF/Indelible Grace/Red Mountain style.
- Choose congregational music that was well-known and singable. We limited the music that did not include congregational singing. In fact, there were only 2 pieces in the entirety of the 3 worship services that did not include congregational singing. Choral prelude and choral offertory on Tuesday night.

Liturgy

- We wanted all three services to look similar while not being completely uniform.
- Great thought and intentionality was given to the formation of the liturgy in order to be familiar and to reflect our denomination.
- Special attention was given to the time limitations of each service when crafting the liturgy.

Liturgists:

- We stressed the brevity of each liturgist leading his portion of the service.
- We encouraged our liturgists to limit any extemporaneous speaking. We achieved this by “scripting” the liturgy to an extent as well as encouraging each liturgist to connect their portion to the overall liturgy with brevity. We also chose liturgists that we felt like would honor our desire for brevity.
- We also wanted it to reflect the diversity in our presbytery, which we felt reflected the diversity in our denomination.

Speakers:

- We sought preachers that were sure to honor Jesus and who were gifted.
- We wanted it to reflect the diversity in our denomination, both in style and other ways.
- We sought to not recommend anyone that we felt could be a lightning rod or polarizing.
- Speaker recommendations were presented to the Host Committee for approval. I will add, there was good deliberation on the speakers and our approach that was very healthy.
- We stressed the time limitations of the services and the need to plan to preach within the allotted time.

Communion: See attached report.

Ushering: See attached report.

Budget: See attached budget.

What worked well

- Dividing up responsibilities.
- Our musicians, liturgists, and speakers did what we asked them to do to help us achieve our objectives.
- Max Bunn and David Allen stepped in as communion chair and ushering chair respectively rather late in the process. They both gave great leadership in those areas and were able to free Steve and David to give attention elsewhere.

Hindsight:

- Steve was not fully prepared for the dynamics at play during the pre-GA setup. There were many groups that were involved in setting up GA. They each had their own responsibilities and could not be counted on to assist with any setup that involved worship.
- David failed to recognize that the GA worship subcommittee was tasked with providing the pulpit for worship and the business of the assembly, as well as a smaller podium for the business of the assembly. Thankfully, we were able to borrow a pulpit and a podium from one of the churches on very short notice.

Advice for future worship subcommittees

- Steve, being very gifted in the area of administration, developed a document to map out and track all of the responsibilities and assignments that fell under the worship subcommittee umbrella for GA 2022. It is incredibly detailed and we would highly encourage future worship subcommittees to consider a similar approach. It served as a master calendar and “to do” list for everyone involved in helping lead worship. We have attached that document. This was incredibly helpful for everyone involved!!!
- Consider appointing a chief musician for each individual worship service. That really simplified the communication and planning for each service. It also allowed Steve to focus on high level responsibilities during the week of GA.
- Schedule with the GA host planner and the production company liaison prior to the GA docket being finalized. This help ensure the adequate time was given for music rehearsals, load in/load out, and sound checks. Stage design and size will also need to be discussed at this meeting. Chief musicians need to be a part of this meeting as well.
- Be aware that there are lots of people functioning in many different ways when setting up for GA. Different groups are tasked with their own responsibilities and cannot be counted on to help. It is important to have your own people to help with any music setup or load in/load out. That included the pulpit setup as well.
- Communication with those who have previously led communion and ushering at GA would be very helpful.

Attachment A: Worship Subcommittee Responsibilities and Assignments

Recruitment					
Note #	Assignment	Responsible Person(s)	Status	Due Date	Details
1	If using co-chairman for Worship Subcommittee, determine what responsibilities will be for each co-chairman.			At least the summer before GA	We had 1 co-chairman focus on the speakers, worship leaders, non-music liturgy, and working with the communion chairman and ushering chairman. The other co-chairman focused on the music, bulletin, budgeting, and monitoring the timeline table. This division worked very well.
2	Recruit Worship Subcommittee members	Chairman/Co-chairman		7/1/2021	
3	Submit names of potential speakers to Worship Committee for approval	Chairman/Co-chairman		9/1/2021	
4	Submit names of potential chief musicians to Worship Committee for approval	Chairman/Co-chairman		10/1/2021	
5	Submit names of potential speakers to the GA Host Committee for approval	Chairman/Co-chairman		10/1/2021	
6	Recruit GA Speakers	Chairman/Co-chairman		10/15/2021	
7	Recruit Chief Musicians for each worship service	Chairman/Co-chairman		10/15/2021	If you are going to use a different music team each night, then we strongly recruiting a different chief musician for each night. This frees the chairman/co-chairmen up to focus on the big picture during GA. (For example, if you plan to have a choir and orchestra one night, then recruit a chief musician for that night who has experience working with those groups and who is willing to take on the responsibilities for the choir and orchestra to perform that night.
8	Recruit a Graphic Designer and Music Notation Designer (this can be the same person)	Chairman/Co-chairman		11/1/2021	
9	Determine what company will print the bulletin. Find out the deadline for final draft.	Worship Committee member - printing		11/1/2021	
10	Submit names of potential worship leaders to Worship Committee for approval	Chairman/Co-chairman		1/25/2022	
11	If planning to use to different music teams each night, then recruit a local mic engineer to work with the production company.				This was strongly recommended by the production company. We hired a person who runs sound in one of our local churches. Having this extra person helped the music setup, rehearsals, and sound checks go much faster during GA week. We paid this person \$700 for the week.
11	Recruit musicians for Tuesday worship service	Tues. Chief Musician		2/15/2022	
12	Recruit musicians for Wednesday worship service	Wed. Chief Musician		2/15/2022	
13	Recruit musicians for Thursday worship service	Thurs. Chief Musician		2/15/2022	
14	Recruit people to create slides for each worship service, and to work with the production company during GA as the slides are being projected.	Chairman/Co-chairman; Chief Musicians		2/15/2022	If the chief musicians already have people that they work with to create slides for their own church, then it works best to recruit those people if they are willing to do it. We had one person who did 1 night for free; another teenager we hired for \$100 to do 2 nights.
15	Recruit worship leaders for worship service	Chairman/Co-chairman		2/15/2022	
16	Recruit worship leaders for Wednesday worship service	Chairman/Co-chairman		2/15/2022	
17	Recruit worship leaders for Thursday worship service	Chairman/Co-chairman		2/15/2022	
Liturgy/Worship Planning:					
Note #	Assignment	Responsible Person(s)	Status	Due Date	Details
1	Determine vision of 3 worship services	Worship Committee		11/1/2021	Tuesday night service (more "traditional" style of worship; choir and orchestra); Wednesday afternoon service (solo or duet musicians due to lack of time for set up and sound checks); Thursday night service (more "Indelible Grace/Red Mountain" style of worship).
2	Obtain Scripture passages from GA speakers	Chairman/Co-chairman		1/1/2022	
3	Report vision of 3 worship services to GA Host Committee for approval	Chairman/Co-chairman		1/20/2022	
4	Give scripture passages to Worship Committee	Chairman/Co-chairman		1/31/2022	
5	Give scripture passages to chief musicians	Chairman/Co-chairman		2/1/2022	

6	Prepare Initial "Order of Worship" (communion will be served at this service) for each service. Song suggestions can be made, but chief musicians will have primary input.	Worship Committee Member(s) - Liturgy		2/7/2022	
7	Approve initial "Orders of Worship."	Worship Committee		2/15/2022	

Attachment B: 2022 General Assembly Worship Expenditures	
Worship Service Items	2022 Expenses
Speakers	\$1,500.00
Tuesday Speaker	\$500.00
Wednesday Speaker	\$500.00
Thursday Speaker	\$500.00
Printing	\$5,664.06
Bulletins (5000 - 3 worship services printed in 1 bulletin)	\$4,664.06
Graphic Designer	\$400.00
Music Notation for Bulletins	\$600.00
Communion Supplies	\$825.26
Juice (prepared for 5000 people)	*
Bread (prepared for 5000 people)	*
Additional Materials	*
Tuesday Worship Service	\$4,850.00
Chief Musician (Conductor)	\$300.00
Organist	\$250.00
Pianist	\$250.00
Percussion	\$250.00
Vocalist (Soprano)	\$200.00
Vocalist (Alto)	\$200.00
Vocalist (Tenor)	\$200.00
Vocalist (Bass)	\$200.00
Violin 1 (\$300.00 X 2 musicians)	\$600.00
Violin 2 (\$300.00 X 2 musicians)	\$600.00
Viola (\$300 X 2 musicians)	\$600.00
Cello (\$300 X 2 musicians)	\$600.00
Double bass (\$300 X 1 musician)	\$300.00
Choir expenses & additional for solo/instrumental musicians	Briarwood
Miscellaneous	\$300.00
Note: This includes 30 minutes of prelude music	
Wednesday Worship Service	\$550.00
Chief Musician (pianist & vocal)	\$300.00
Vocalist	\$250.00
Thursday Worship Service	\$2,050.00
Chief Musician (guitar & vocal)	\$300.00
Guitar/mandolin & vocal	\$250.00
Pianist & vocal	\$250.00
Violin & vocal	\$250.00
Bass guitar	\$250.00

Keyboard & accordion	\$250.00
Electric guitar	\$250.00
Drums	\$250.00
Note: This includes 30 minutes of prelude music	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$1,658
Digital Piano Delivery (delivered from Briarwood)	\$700.00
Additional lyric slide worker	\$100.00
Additional Stage Mic Technician	\$700.00
Additional Monitor Engineer	PCA Office
Miscellaneous (Green room snacks)	\$158.28
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17,097.60

Worship Subcommittee: Communion Team

Lord's Supper Preparation: This will vary depending on the amount of people you are trying to serve but I would recommend going to the largest church in the Presbytery and asking their communion prep team to take the lead on the preparation. It took a total of 3 different churches trays sets, plus 13 volunteers to prepare. We were able to use the system of the largest church's preparation team and just add to it for the largest GA in the history of the PCA. We prepared 125 tray sets to serve 5,000 people the Lord's Supper. It took 10 large Welches Grape Juice bottles and 10 boxes of crackers. It took the team of 13 between 2-3 hours to prepare the trays.

Lord's Supper Distribution: Depending on the Layout of the Convention Hall, you will need 50-75 elders to distribute the elements. We recruited most of the elders from the group of Chaplains and from the local churches in the Presbytery. We created a plan and gave assignments to each of the elders before the training meeting. We emailed this out so people could have a basic understanding before the training time. Please see attached plan as example.

Worship Subcommittee: Usher Team

Birmingham GA: Ushers

I would have greatly appreciated some previous usher chairman walking me through each day before the event began. “Here’s what will happen Tuesday. Here’s what you need to prepare for. Here’s what works, etc., etc.”

Recruiting:

I wanted to have ushers represented from churches across our presbytery and thought we could easily accomplish that. But idealism met reality and reality won. I should have spent more time focused on the three or four larger churches in our presbytery and working very closely with key staff members, NOT church members who have some hand in ushering at their services.

Email problems:

I don’t know why but I was never able to get email addresses for the ushers who volunteered. I had to go to Tom, our volunteer coordinator, to get that information. It would have been better if I could have emailed each volunteer usher soon after he or she volunteered. At crunch time when everyone was really busy, I needed to contact the ushers who signed up late. Although it was the fault of no one, getting those email addresses quickly was not only problematic, they were sent in a file that caused me to copy and paste email addresses one at a time.

Signup sheet:

Overall, I found the signup sheet to be unwieldy. Surely there must be one that is more user friendly.

Tuesday night, the first night of GA:

We needed at least ten volunteer ushers to hand out worship service folders Tuesday night. We had none because we were told chaplains would do that—and they did, until they had to take their seats at the beginning of the service. We must have had 500 or more people arrive after the chaplains left the assembly hall entrance with no one to greet them or hand them folders. Moving forward, I believe it is important to recruit ushers for Tuesday nights.

Safety: The PCA apparently arranged for two paramedics and four police officers to be in each service. We didn’t know where they were and had no way to reach them if we had needed them. In fact, I never saw any of those first responders except the one officer who was present during the offering count. If we could do it over, I would want those paramedics and police officers to make a brief appearance at the usher training and for us to know how or where to contact them.

Layout: From at least an ushering perspective, it would have been very helpful to have had the floor layout well before we received it. I drove to the civic center Monday to see the layout first hand but could not gain access. It seems like there could have been some way for the usher and communion committee chairmen to see what we would be dealing with the next day.

Usher training location: We needed a certain room each night for usher training vs. “meet in the back of the auditorium.” There are a couple of reasons that are unnecessary to mention, but having that space would have worked better.

Nametags: It would have been nice to have usher nametags that included the usher’s name and his or her church name.

Free parking for volunteers: I think having a nearby lot with free parking was a huge plus and one the ushers greatly appreciated.

Conclusion: I told someone Thursday night that if I had three or four more nights of coordinating GA ushers, I would know how to do it. That is exactly what I referred to in the “big picture” comments above. I made too many decisions on the fly because I didn’t have anything or anyone to say: “Here’s the process for doing that.”

Report on Women's & Children's Activities, GA 2022, Birmingham, AL

Introduction & Overview

We had the opportunity to plan the GA twice, the first one being cancelled due to COVID in 2020. This gave us a unique perspective on the whole thing.

One of the big lessons learned is that GA involves a bunch of rookies (each year's Host Committee) re-inventing the wheel to some extent. Although there is some good information in the Host Committee Manual provided by the PCA's AC, it is lacking in many ways. The assumption is that reading past Host Committee reports will fill in the gaps. We found this NOT to be the case.

It would be nice if we could just say to the next Host Committee, ask the AC what else you need to know. But herein is the problem: we (the rookies) don't know what specific questions to ask. And it appears the AC thinks the HC Manual is adequate. But it clearly is not, as the reports below will show. Thus many things are learned by trial and error and through much discussion that could have been avoided (saving many, many man-hours of work) if the AC had told us some things (based on their 48 years of experience) before we started, or as we got going in the early days.

This report will cover the following areas:

1. Women's Luncheon
2. Women's Tours
3. Women's Hospitality Room
4. Children and Youth Activities
5. Nursery
6. Women & Children Registration

1. Women's Luncheon Notes

Theme: Purified to Proclaim...generation to generation

Speaker: Pam Benton, \$300 + travel (\$212 mileage round trip Nashville) Total cost: \$512. Mrs. Benton's 35-minute talk dealt with mentoring younger women. She also spoke on hospitality and developing relationships.

Musicians: we didn't have any in order to get people out on time; Cost 0

Flowers: We used a tall gold cross, wooden box for height, 2 urns from Briarwood's Flower Guild and I brought 2 ferns from my house and placed them on the stage in front of the podium; Cost: 0

AV operator and equipment; podium microphone; Frank Barker III, \$100

Lunches: - 274 lunches at PCA contracted \$30/plate rate = \$8220; This was PCA contracted rate for seated lunch; due to staffing shortages post Covid we had 3 double sided buffet lines. See note below on problems encountered due to this change.

Favor: Prayer calendar created by Donna Evans at no charge; we paid only for the heavier paper and my assistant laminated them at no charge to the Committee. We printed 300 copies and could have given out more if we had them. This was the Luncheon highlight with regards to giveaways. Cost: \$135.78

Book Giveaways: Each of our 35 tables had a wrapped book giveaway on it. CDM decided that the woman who was the youngest pastor's wife was chosen to receive the giveaway. Because it was limited to Pastor's wives, many ruling elders' wives were excluded from the giveaway. Cost: 0

Decorations – we used Briarwood's hurricane globes, candles, and coffee beans; we only purchased enough placemats to decorate 35 round tables. Cost: \$77.13

Program Printing costs- CDM created, designed, & paid for the luncheon programs

CDM Women's ministry paid for speaker's hotel & dinner the night before

Things I should have known:

CDM Women's Ministry told me **this is their luncheon**. According to them, they have final say over the speaker; they must issue the speaker invitation; they maintain communication between the speaker. They wouldn't even provide the speaker's contact information.

CDM said that they would be paying for just 3 meals: Stephen Estock, Kathy Wargo, and Karen Hodge. They invited 10 that were registered by Kathy Wargo and bypassed the usual registration and payment process. We probably paid for all of them. This also created a problem since we got this information last minute and thus could not seat all our volunteers.

I wish someone had said, "Your job as the GA Host is to :

- recruit volunteers to work the event;
- select a theme & theme verse;
- pay for the meal, speaker and her travel;
- decorate the tables
- provide a favor to reflect your theme
- provide the opening prayer and 5-minute welcome."

It would have saved me a lot of time and emotional energy. Instead, I was told by the Host Committee, "This is our event and we can do it anyway we want to." The **AC GA handbook is unclear** as to whose clear responsibility for specific tasks according to the GA Event Planner Amanda Burton. I truly believe this needs to be addressed and all parties, both CDM, AC, and the Host Committee, need to fully understand who is responsible for what. If the Host Committee is really the GA Host Comm, then the Luncheon Host Committee Chair should be able to invite the luncheon speaker and contact the speaker directly instead of working through (as opposed to with) the CDM Women's ministry team. I found them to be difficult and at times obstructive. I believe this is an issue of "turf and territory" and again, I wish I'd known from the beginning that what was really expected of us as the Host was to pay for, decorate, and provide the manpower for the event.

The event was presented as a pastor wives' luncheon, **but there were many ruling elder wives in attendance.** I think there should be less emphasis on being a pastor's wife and just focus on being a PCA woman. Otherwise, it comes across as a clique of very special pastor's wives. Maybe it used to be all pastors' wives, but we had a record number of ruling elders attend and I think their wives are just as worthy of respect and recognition as a pastor's wife.

Other problems to note (I wish I had known):

The BJCC converted us to a buffet lunch instead of seated/plated. We weren't prepared for the service issues we encountered as a result:

- Water dispensers weren't refilled and water was the main beverage being consumed. We directed the women to soft drinks (of which there was plenty) and eventually got water refilled.
- I should have had a Spanish speaking volunteer who could communicate with the BJCC wait staff. We had no servers who spoke English and every time I asked a BJCC server a question, I received a "no Anglais" response.
- Tables weren't cleared until after the luncheon. If I had known beforehand, I would have asked for trays & cocktail tables to be placed around the room and my volunteers and I would have at least cleared the tables before the speaker began.
- None of the BJCC servers were inside the ballroom. They were all huddled in the hallway together with the "no anglais" responses.
- With the change from plated dinner to buffet, I hadn't considered that no one would be refilling beverages. Most women were drinking water, the disposable glasses were small, and refills were needed. Had I known this, we could have brought our own pitchers for refills by the volunteers. Bottled waters would have been much easier, taken less time to grab and go, and improved logistics. I honestly "get" not bringing in your own outside products, but if the BJCC can't service what they are selling, then some accommodation needs to be made.
- I thought we were having iced tea. I saw tea on the invoice order and didn't realize it was "hot tea." We are in the South on a 100 degree day with no iced

tea:) This made me realize again the importance of the (T&C's), terms and conditions!! Read the BOE carefully and make sure it includes water!!

- Check and re-check your menu items on the BOE. Initially ours only included 2 buffet lines instead of 3 and had no green salad or dressing. The BJCC folks will only supply what is signed off on the BOE. Make sure WATER is included because 85% of the women drank water.

Things that went well:

- We came in under budget.
- We finished a few minutes before 1PM and got people out on time.
- Positive feedback on good food, Mrs. Benton's talk, and the prayer calendars.
- My Volunteers were wonderful. I had planned on 13, but only 10 were able to serve due to a Covid illness, shuffling staff, and a grandchild arriving early. I encourage having 1 or 2 extra volunteers, so you have some margin for contingencies.

To contact for more information about Women's Luncheon: **Donna Evans,**
donnamevans@aol.com

2. Women's Tours

TUESDAY, JUNE 21 2:00 - 4:00

Blurb

Bus Tour of Birmingham

Experience a historical tour of Birmingham guided by two charming historians. These ladies are Birmingham natives and members of the PCA. They will be unfolding not only the history of Birmingham, but also HIS-story of our city—the beautiful story of God's hand on our city through the years. These ladies will give a sweet look into the years past as they graciously share their own stories of life in this their home. Riding and Walking tour with steps. Light refreshments will be included.

- City of Birmingham Bus Tour
- Part of our tour included a stop at Vulcan Park which is located on top of Red Mountain. Many ladies walked up the gentle slope to see the museum, mining shaft, gift shop and the beautiful overlook of Birmingham. The most breath-taking view is seen from the very top of the statue of Vulcan!
- Women's Events Registration \$10
- Sold out at 72
- Attendance 60 Not including Volunteers
- Volunteers 6 (Includes 2 Tour Guides)
- Goodie Bags and Small Bottles of Water and \$6 Vulcan Admission covered in Budget.
- \$25 per Guide as a personal Honorarium

COMMENTS:

The bus tours were pretty, fun and educational! Because of the coming of the World Games just behind General Assembly, some roads were blocked and sights were unable to have us visit them. The ladies seemed to have fun chatting and certainly heard the Gospel and were encouraged to be creative and serve the Lord with whatever He has given us.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 1:30 - 3:30

Blurb**Botanical Gardens OPTION A**

Enjoy a relaxing guided tour through the Beautiful Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The Gardens is Alabama's largest living museum with more than 12,000 different plants in its living collections. It is always a beautiful day at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Be sure to visit Leaf and Petal plant and gift shop located near the front gate. Walking Tour. Light refreshments.

- Botanical Gardens
- Registration Cost \$15
- Sold Out at 35, initially; we opened it up... Sold Out again at 56.
- Volunteers 3
- Attendance 40
- Goody bags and Small Bottles of Water covered in the Budget, there was no admission cost.

COMMENTS:

This outing was a big hit! Although it was hot and humid, everyone seemed to enjoy the walk through the gardens. There is a nice plant store/gift shop at the entrance to the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. It was also a real treat and the air conditioning was well received! Each lady was given a fun little goodie bag and a small bottle of cold water for the day's event. There were additional waters in a cooler on the bus. The bus driver was kind enough to carry the cooler to the park benches near the entrance of the Gardens, so that the ladies could have another bottle of water as desired.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 1:30 - 3:30

Blurb**Theaters OPTION B****The Alabama Theatre**

Built in 1927 by Paramount Studios as an Alabama showcase for Paramount films, the Alabama Theatre is home to The Wurlitzer Opus 1783 Pipe Organ—one of the fantastic highlights of this theatre tour. It is still used today, particularly during the month of December, as the crowds pour in for Christmas Carol sing-a-longs, prior to the traditional showing of the famous Christmas Movie: "It's a Wonderful Life." It's the Alabama tradition!

The Lyric Theatre

Built in 1914 for B.F. Keith's Vaudeville circuit, the Lyric is one of few theaters still existing today that was specifically designed to maximize the acoustics and close seating needed for vaudeville shows. Major stars such as the Marx Brothers, Mae West, Sophie Tucker, Will Rogers and Milton Berle played the Lyric. Berle said it was "as fine a theatre as any in New York."

- Theaters Tours
- Registration Cost \$20
- Sold 31 out of 35
- Volunteers 3
- Attendance 40
- Goody Bags and Small Bottles of Water covered in the Budget

Comments:

This was a fun experience for all who attended! With the goodie bags filled with things that you would find at the "picture show" these ladies were able to spend the afternoon out of the heat. This made for a relaxing afternoon.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23 9:00 - 2:00

Blurb

Civil Rights Tour & Lunch on your own in Homewood

You will see the struggles and triumphs of the civil rights movement chronicled in a dramatic, multimedia museum. Despite the tragic nickname "Bombingham" that circulated worldwide, the quest for racial reconciliation continues to spread throughout Birmingham. Evangel Presbytery includes three of the PCA's predominantly African American congregations. To God be the Glory! Don't miss this chance to be blessed and challenged! Walking and Standing. Lunch will be on your own in downtown Homewood.

9:00 Speaker: Pamela Stanford

9:30 - Brunch on your own in Homewood

12:30 Civil Rights Institute

2:00 Return to BJCC

- Civil Rights and Lunch in Homewood
- Registration Cost \$15
- Sold out at 72
- Volunteers 6
- Attendance 63
- Goody Bags and Small Bottles of Water and \$13.50 admission covered in the Budget
- \$50 personal honorarium for the speaker

Comments:

This day was a long one with lots of activity! Our speaker, Pamela Stanford began our day by directing our hearts and minds to look for the full counsel of the Lord and to consider all that we see and do each day through the lens of a Biblical Christian World and Life View.

We needed to rearrange our day, because the BCRI needed to reschedule our visit from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. So after the morning talk, we rode the buses directly to Homewood, which is just a few miles from the BJCC. There, the ladies had free time to visit with each other while walking around, over brunch or just having coffee with her friend.

The last leg of our trip was to visit the BCRI. It is a very well done!! The BCRI is full of information, art work and other media that documents the activities and atrocities of the Civil Rights era. There is much to read and consider. The ladies lingered and read through all the displays until it was time to return to the BJCC.

General Notes:

The places we visited on the tours and bus ride experience all went very well and was very enjoyable! The bus drivers were excellent! They were courteous and particularly helpful with the ice chests and with ladies in need of assistance with getting on and off of the bus! We used Cline Tours and they were altogether wonderful to work with!

Our hope was to give every one of the GA ladies at least one option for an activity to enjoy during her visit here in Birmingham. There were also so many great things to do with regard with the GA; seminars, personal meetings, childcare and of course worship times to consider when planning. General Assembly is a wonderful week! When we began planning this summer's GA, we were encouraged to have our plan all laid out for the brochure before Christmas holidays, because it went to print in January. Planning with margin is a good rule of thumb; things can change as the event draws near. Location, schedules, etc.

It is essential to have a very good Registration system that had each woman registered with her email address and cell phone for good communication in the weeks leading up to the event and for the week of GA. The challenge is being able to get her information.

NOTE: The commissioners are registered separately from the women. Some men are registered through their church, so their wife is not aware of her registration need.

It would be optimum to have a clear way to send a follow-up email to confirm the ladies of their registration and way to cancel, if necessary. There were others that still preferred to register on paper with a check, these had mailed in their registration.

We also had a few ladies that came to GA, at the last minute, who were not registered, but wanted to participate. We needed to be able to register them. We had no way to charge a card. That presented a different problem. I wonder if that could be added to the APP?

It was disappointing when several ladies didn't show up for the event, yet there were ladies on the Wait List because the event was Sold Out. Managing a Wait List was difficult at the last minute, because it was too late to email people that the event had openings at the last minute.

We devised a plan to tell Waitlist ladies to "fly Standby". They simply went to the bus and waited to see if there was space at the last minute. Everyone seemed pleased with this solution!

I have had a wonderful time planning these events. So very thankful for the PCA and the General Assembly!

I am happy to answer any questions or discuss any to these items further.

Sincerely,

Cindy Ball,

Woman's Events and Tours Subcommittee Chair

billyandcindyball@me.com

205-529-5555

3. Women's Hospitality Room

This report has 2 parts:

- a. info about the hospitality room itself*
- b. Info about the tote bags given to each woman*

a. Women's Hospitality Room

Our hope was to create a comfortable space for ladies to stop by and connect, be prayed for, grab a cold drink and snack, and to have a place for smaller groups to meet up.

Set-Up:

The room had nine small round tables with 4 chairs per table. Chairs were also put around the outer edge of the room. Additionally, we had two tables for food and drinks and two tables for free books.

Hospitality Room Hours Open:

- Tuesday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (soft opening)
- Tuesday 1:30 – 4:00 pm
- Wednesday 8:00 am – 11:00 am and 1:30 – 4:00 pm
- Thursday 8:00 – 11:00 am and 1:30 – 4:00 pm

Expenses:

- Snacks and Beverages in Hospitality Suite purchased through the Convention/Sheraton- \$1390
- The daily breakdown for the food is attached. It was quite expensive and we did not have an option for plain water other than bottles which was not feasible.

Other:

- We had three hospitality room volunteers in the room during “open hours.” These women welcomed those who came in and offered assistance/answered questions.
- Decorations on the individual tables were minor and included a bud vase with a single flower, notepads and pens, mints and candy, tri-fold flyer with information about Birmingham area attractions and “facts.”

Feedback and Recommendations:

- We had a table with free book giveaways for every session. We did not do a raffle. It was a first come first served arrangement. We found this brought many women to the door for each “session.” We found this easy to manage and it brought women through consistently. Some of the donated books included the following:

InterVarsity Press	My Vertical Neighborhood
InterVarsity Press	A Spacious Life
Greenville Pres. Theo. Seminary	Pads of Paper
AtHisFeetStudies	Psalm study books

- The food was significantly higher priced than what we were told it would cost. We would suggest a plain water dispenser, but this was not an option for us. Also – we were not allowed to bring outside food in to help alleviate the cost. We did find that as long as we had coffee or drinks the women were satisfied. However more food would have been a benefit.
- We had a steady flow of people in and out; the Cup of Cold-Water event was when the most people were in the room at one time.
- The greeters received many questions throughout the day related to children’s events, location of women’s events and CDM sponsored events. It would be helpful to have all of that information available for the greeters so as to answer the questions of the various women throughout the day.
- The room became a place for nursing mothers. It would be good to have a designated spot for nursing mothers near the hospitality room.
- It is helpful to have a rolling cart for when the event is over to transport items easily.

- Make sure you have a direct phone number for the Convention Center food services. We had trouble with one of our drink dispensers and it took almost an hour to get it attended to and it was during our busiest time.

b. Women’s Tote Bags

We wanted to provide the women with items that would be beneficial to them in their personal walk with the Lord and serve as a resource to the women in their home church.

Beginning in October 2021 we contacted the 2021 General Assembly vendors requesting their participation in the women’s tote bags for GA 2022. Many agreed to provide items for the tote bags and additional donations were made for the Hospitality Room and Women’s Luncheon.

The following are items we received for the tote bags:

Publisher	# Items
Crossway	400 <i>Blessed</i> by Nancy Guthrie
Log College Press	400 <i>The Mission of Parenting</i> by Thomas Smyth and flyers
Banner of Truth	400 <i>How to Read the Bible</i> by JC Ryle
PrP Books	400 <i>Freedom to Flourish</i>
New Growth Press	400 <i>The Good News for Little Hearts</i> and postcards
Donna Evans (Purchased reduced rate)	350 <i>Bible Bits: Timeless Truths for Busy Lives</i>

The Tote Bags were donated by the Administrative Committee of the PCA. They were *By Faith* bags that were not able to be used due to COVID for a previous event. In total we made 400 tote bags and all were picked up at the Women’s registration.

Cost:

- Instead of a donation, we purchased the book listed above by Donna Evans at \$3.51/book. The total was: \$1228.50
- No other costs for the bags

Scheduling details:

- Sunday Afternoon we dropped off all the totes, and books for the women in a designated area with tables at the convention center.
- Monday morning we had 8 women gather from 9:00 am – 11:00 am to stuff the 400 bags and take them to the Women’s registration area.
- We used a rolling cart to transfer items from the packing area to the registration area.

Suggestions:

- We thought we were making more than would be needed for the event. However, we had many women register on site and many women who thought they were registered but were not. So having a 50 person buffer was very helpful to us.
- If we had left over tote bags, our plan was to use the books as additional giveaways during the Cup of Cold Water event in the Hospitality room. However, we did not have left over books.
- Make sure to have a rolling cart or two to make moving items easier.

4. Children and Youth Activities

Objective

Plan, prepare, and implement programs for the children and youth who will be attending General Assembly. Create fun, safe, and engaging activities that bless all those who attend.

What we Did / Description of Activities

Wednesday, June 22nd

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMMING

Option One: Rising 1st – 5th Grade

- Camp Briarwood
 - Time: 8:30-3:30
 - Cost: \$20 per day early bird, \$25 regular, \$30 onsite
 - Limit: 40
 - Description: After gathering at the Sheraton in room _____ we will load our buses for an adventure you won't soon forget! Camp Briarwood is operated by Quest Recreation, a sports and recreation ministry with a global reach under the supervision of Briarwood Presbyterian Church. Through activities like hiking, swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts and much more, Camp Briarwood will provide an atmosphere where the physical and the spiritual blend together and the desired results of fun and spiritual growth are sure to take place! While lunch is provided, if your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please send an appropriate labeled lunch with them.

Option Two: Rising Kindergarten – 5th Grade

- McWane Science Center
 - Time: 9:00-2:30
 - Cost: \$15 early bird, \$20 regular, \$25 onsite
 - Limit 40
 - After gathering at the Sheraton in room _____ we will load our buses and drive to Birmingham's McWane Science Center for a fun filled day of inquiry and innovation, wonder and curiosity! The McWane Science Center is

four floors of interactive exhibits designed to bring discovery to life and inspire a life-long love of learning. After McWane, we'll head to Covenant Presbyterian Church for lunch and Bible lesson plus time to play basketball, nine square, dodgeball, and craft! We'll enjoy popsicles and then load the bus to meet you back at the Sheraton. While lunch is provided, if your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please send an appropriate labeled lunch with them.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

- Birmingham's Christian Service Mission – Rising 6th – 12th grade
 - Time: 8:30-3:30
 - Cost: \$10 early bird, \$15 regular, \$20 onsite
 - Description: After gathering at the Sheraton in room _____ we will load our buses and drive to Birmingham's Christian Service Mission. Connecting resources to needs, Birmingham's Christian Service Mission is committed to loving the under-served and under-resourced people in the city of Birmingham. Partnering with them in ministry, we will help collect, connect, and share God's blessings with those in need. Afterwards we will venture to Crestwood Park for lunch and a friendly game of flag football - this is Alabama after all! While lunch is provided, if your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please send an appropriate labeled lunch with them. Please wear close toed shoes for our time of ministry with CSM.
-

Thursday, June 23rd

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMMING

Option One: A Return to Camp Briarwood

Option Two: Rising Kindergarten – 5th Grade

- Water Fun Day, Created & Built for a Purpose – Covenant Presbyterian Church
 - Time: 9-3:30
 - Cost: \$10 early bird, \$15 regular, \$20 onsite
 - Limit: 40
 - Description: After gathering at the Sheraton in room _____ we will load our buses and drive to Covenant Presbyterian Church We'll have a full day of fun! We've got 2 water slides, a slip n' slide, and water balloons, not to mention basketball, dodgeball, and nine square in the air! After a morning of fun in the sun and water, we'll enjoy lunch and then jump into our Created and Built for a Purpose Summer Camp Projects, learning the truth of who we are in Christ – created for a purpose, the good works He has prepared for us! Lunch will be provided, however if your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please send an appropriate labeled lunch with them. Please also have your child “pre-lathered” with sunscreen and / or send along a can of spray on sunscreen for them to reapply along with a towel and pair of dry clothes.

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

- Birmingham's Christian Service Mission & Top Golf – Rising 6th – 12th grade
 - Time: 8:30-4:00
 - Cost (covers lunch and Top Golf): \$15 early bird, \$20 regular, \$25 onsite
 - Description: After gathering at the Sheraton in room _____ we will load our buses and drive to Birmingham's Christian Service Mission for another

day of serving and connecting resources to needs. Birmingham's Christian Service Mission is committed to loving the underserved and under-resourced people in the city of Birmingham. Partnering with them in ministry, we will help collect, connect, and share God's blessings with those in need. Afterwards we will venture to Birmingham's Top Golf and wrap up our time together while enjoying some hole-in-ones, but more likely a whole lotta hole-in-none's! Please wear close toed shoes for our time of ministry with CSM.

What Worked

- Getting started very early in the planning process, reaching out to all area youth and children ministries and having a meeting to discuss potential ideas.
- As our General Assembly grows, and therefore the number of kids attending grows, having multiple options for them to choose from was good as it allowed us to increase attendance numbers without one event being too large.
- Having the youth partner with Birmingham's Christian Service Mission which gave them the opportunity to serve our city while hearing the testimony and passion of CSM's director.
- Partnering with Camp Briarwood for one of the options offered to children. This took a lot of the pressure off our planning since Camp Briarwood staff (who were Ministry Safe certified) organized and implemented this component.
- Having Covenant Presbyterian Church take the responsibility for one of the options offered to children. Like Camp Briarwood, this took a lot of the pressure off since Covenant used their summer interns to organize and implement this component.
- Regularly coordinating with all the other Family Subcommittee members. This ensured our schedules were in agreement, thus assuring that mothers would be available to drop off and pick up their kids at the appropriate times without having to miss other events they may like to attend.
- Having different drop off and pick up times for the various events in order to help control as much confusion as possible, and having different drop off and pick up locations for the youth and the children.
- Having T-shirts for both our volunteers and the youth / children who attended, and also having nametags.
- Communicating personally with all the parents, giving them a detailed schedule of what to expect each day along with asking them to fill out a Google Doc form that included emergency contact and medical information.
- Personally contacting the bus company that our transportation committee contracted with in order to ensure we were on the same page and would not have any surprises.
- Recruiting volunteers that had servant's hearts, positive attitudes, were problem solvers who took ownership of their areas of responsibilities, and were willing to adapt, be flexible, and adjust as necessary.
- Having contingency plans in place to adjust for the excessive heat wave that Birmingham experienced the week of GA, and also being able to adjust as we realized some plans were not going to come to fruition.

- PRAYER SUPPORT!!!

What Could Have Been Improved Upon

- We should have filled this subcommittee up with more people. Area youth and children ministries are VERY busy during the summer running a variety of programs and events, and they are also recruiting volunteers to help with those programs and events. Teaching Elders who serve as youth and children's pastors are planning on attending the Assembly. This dynamic made it difficult for people to serve with this committee. We realized late in the game that TE's were not the ones we needed to ask for help from, but the better option was the un-ordained youth and children's directors.
- We should have more carefully read through all the Host Committee Reports from future years, and paid more attention to their lessons learned. We also should have called them and visited with them during the previous GA's.
- Even though we had separate rooms and separate times for the various drop offs, this time was still somewhat chaotic given early comers, late comers, and no shows that we were waiting on. If we would have had the rooms further separated from one another this flow would have worked more smoothly. Also, if we would have had more volunteer help available during the drop off time, we could have had some type of activity for the kids to participate in while we waited on everyone to get there.
- It would have been great if all the churches in the Presbytery would have agreed not to have youth and children's events of their own going during the week of GA, but instead would have prioritized having all their staff and interns available to plan and implement GA youth and children's activities.
- We could have developed a better method of maintaining a waiting list, or we could have possibly added another event in order to add more youth and children. Telling people there was no more room was difficult. Our numbers were limited due to bus size, and therefore adding anyone the day of was almost impossible unless someone else didn't show up or they could drive themselves.
- We could have done a better job working with the registrations team to improve the information we received on each kid. The format we received was difficult to print, but I am sure we could have communicated a better way for them to format it for us to include precisely what we needed (mainly emergency contact and medical info). The online PDF that was supposed to be filled out with each registration would have been great to receive, but the format we received was difficult to print in a readable fashion in order to have hard copies on-site.

Advice for Future Assemblies

- PRAY – PRAY – AND THEN PRAY SOME MORE!
- Fill your subcommittee up with people who regularly work with youth and children, and then meet and communicate with them early and often.
- Call those who chaired this subcommittee in previous years and get any helpful info they may not have included in this report.

- Make sure the parents who have registered receive clear communication from whoever will be leading their child’s activities in order to ensure their expectations are correct.
- Many people will want to be exceptions to the rule (i.e., their child is too young for an event but they assure you their child can handle it). Someone needs to be prepared to be the “heavy”, if not and you make room for those exceptions, then make sure your volunteers are good at handling problems!
- Have a meeting with your team onsite before the week of General Assembly. Make sure everyone is aware of where to park, how to navigate the hotel / conference center, and are up to speed and on target with what they are being asked to do. Do all you can to limit surprises, and make sure to answer any questions your team might have early on, so that you are not scrambling week of.
- Have a GREAT TIME and ENJOY THE WEEK – spending time with these kids will be a delight and a deep blessing. Remember that it is a privilege and a joy to use your gifts serving Christ and His people!

To contact for more information about Youth & Children’s Activities: **Jason Ellerbee**,
jellerbee@christcovenantcullman.org office (256)-739-0505

5. Nursery

Here is a summary:

*Communication needs to be better coming from the original registrations to the Nursery Team. Clearer and more concise reporting would have been helpful earlier. For example, we never received any of the medical forms from the original registration.

*In the space being used for Nursery age kids there needs to be access to a refrigerator and a useable sink for cleaning of bottles and kids if needed. We had several situations of diapers being messy and needing a spot to clean off staff and kids.

*The biggest takeaway from the Nursery side is that all the Children's events should cover the same time period each day. There was a lot of confusion about when to pick up different age groups. We had lots of late families. Would be easier if drop off and pick up times lined up across the age groups.

I would be glad to talk to the group handling GA next year!

To contact for more information about Nursery: **Jami Bennett**, jamibennett97@gmail.com

6. Registration for Women & Children

Pre-registration

PCAGA Family Registration Report

I want to first thank Bobby Parks for recruiting me to be a part of this. It was a blessing... while slightly tedious it was fun to work with passionate people who love the Lord. It was a good match for my gifting and passions.

I entered the team late... so there wasn't much I could do to adjust the organizational/communication problems that I perceived. My responsibilities settled on:

- entering check or cash entries that were mailed to the church into the system
- answering common questions as a "first line":
- event requirements and constraints
- waitlists
- starting the refund process by forwarding to admin@pcaga.net

My recommendations roughly in priority/impact order:

- 1 Structure the organization and email accounts according to who can actually solve people's problems.
- 2 Ensure consistent button and link design on the homepage.
- 3 Have a "reason" field for the contact form that routes to a ticketing system first.
- 4 Use a system that permits automating reports for nursery and various events.
- 5 Develop and maintain email templates for common responses.
- 6 Filter out any automatic "noisy" notifications from the system so that when you open the "work" email all you see is people to help.

I'll expand on this:

- 1 **Structure.** My name and email were listed on the PCAGA website as the person to contact about problems or refunds. **The trouble was... I was not allowed to process refunds.** I could do it in Regfox¹, but I was told not to for security reasons. 90% of the emails I received should have gone directly to the one group that processed refunds. We should either give the person who is answering the email the ability to process refunds, or create two emails, one for refunds and one for all other questions. This was made worse when someone emailed an

event coordinator for a refund, who then emailed me and pacga.net separately... the confusion abounded.

2 Design. (I am professionally a User Experience designer, so this is a bit of a soapbox.) The website for the event was beautiful and was consistent from a branding perspective, but not from a user experience perspective. The Problems:

- There were both red and blue buttons. On most websites, blue means *unvisited*, red or an alternate means *visited*. Red can also mean a destructive action you can't take back.
- The buttons also didn't clearly communicate their intent. It might say "Online Form."

3 Some suggestions:

- Use a consistent scheme for all buttons or links. They should all look the same to not confuse end-users.
- Clearly spell out what the action of the button is. Instead of saying "Online Form," say "Women's Online Registration Form." This will prevent confusion, and is part of a good accessibility practice for any of the people we serve who can't see and read the internet through a tool called a screenreader.

4 Reason Field. This is closely connected to problem #1. Instead of having a bare email for people to contact, have a small form with at least the following fields:

- Reason (dropdown with options we design)
- Their Name
- Their email
- Their message

5 By guiding the user to choose a reason, we could actually route the email to the person who can answer the question directly without the middleman. So much of my work was the equivalent of "thank you for that question. Can I forward you to the person who can answer it?" It took extra time, it probably caused frustration to the people we serve, and it added confusion because the person would respond to the wrong person.

6 Ticketing System. A ticketing system would be an expansion of the Reason in #3. Instead of hooking up the form to an email or set of emails, you would send it to some ticketing system like Zendesk or Trello. You would set up rules to assign people to tickets based on the Reason... refunds would be assigned the PCAGA team for example. The

huge advantage of tickets over bare email is you can see whether the person has been helped. In the month prior to the event, my inbox was 50% people to help and 50% everyone else emailing me to check to see the status of whether the last person was helped. By having a centralized system of record like a ticketing system, everyone knows what they are responsible for and no balls are dropped. You can even support delegation... if someone is sick, they can email the team, and you can find *all the tasks for which they are responsible*.

7 Email Templates. This is a small "protip." Everyone on the team is a professional "something-else" other than working on this conference. The more we can automate and shorten the workload on the conference, the more we can do marriage counseling, sermon prep, or whatever day-job the Lord has called you to. As the "registrar front-desk person," each time I typed up a new answer to a question ("how do I get on a waitlist?" "Can I bring my children to an adult event?", "when do I need to arrive?" "Who can tell me about allergens in the kids' food?") I *saved* it as a template. From then on, when that question came up again (which it will!) I simply copied the body of my answer, changed the name at the top, and sent. My answers were faster, more accurate, and took much less time.

8 Email Filters. This is another protip for someone handling the deluge of email. As the registrar, I set up filters in gmail² to move to archive all the receipts, notifications of signed up... everything that wasn't a person asking for help. That meant that when I got a notification in my inbox, I knew I should respond to it, and I didn't waste any time deleting or scrolling through emails that didn't matter, or miss someone asking for help because it was buried under hundreds of "Someone has registered for your event - Regfox" emails.

Those are the big ones that affect the whole team. There were other minor annoyances, but these are the ones that will help the next PCAGA team be effective and efficient in handling the onslaught of questions and registrations.

1 Regfox was our event management system. It owned the signup form, the registration and checkin, and reporting. It had payment for credit card online and onsite. Checks and cash were entered manually. [☞](#)

2 [How to create filters in gmail](#) [☞](#)

To contact for more information about Online Registration: **Evan Travers** <evan.travers@gmail.com>

On-site registration

This is an area in which a lot of improvement can be made and this relates to the pre-registration process as well.

1. Many women (at least 30) arrive at GA assuming they are registered because they “think” their husbands registered them while the husband was registering as a Commissioner. When we looked at the Commissioner Registration site it became apparent why this is the case. This should be changed by the AC of PCA on the Commissioner Registration site. We have some suggestions as to how to do this better.
2. It is possible that previous GA did not have the problem of women’s and children’s events filling up and thus many people arriving without having pre-registered could simply sign up when they arrived. ALL of our events were full a week or two (in some cases even earlier) before the GA. This caused many women to be frustrated when they arrived at registration. As GA continues to grow, Host Committees need to plan on larger numbers and have a “waiting list” system in place BEFORE the GA. We are not adequately warned of this and were thus unprepared and had to invent a plan on the fly.

To contact for more information about On-site Registration: **Bobby Parks**, bjparks@briarwood.org or call at (205) 612-9969

General Feedback on areas that need change

Budgeting for Women & Children Activities

This is one of the areas in which the wheel is reinvented every year.

- This was a waste of man-hours (not a financial issue but a stewardship of time issue). All of us on the HC have full-time jobs. Therefore, to have to sit down and figure out a budget spreadsheet for such a complicated event is just bad stewardship.
- There should be a “Budget Template” from the AC for Women and Children. To say things change from year to year in each city is not a valid excuse. A template can be edited to remove or add items but there should be a starting point developed from the past and given to the new Host Committee.
- In regards to budgeting, it should be clarified up front who pays for what – ie, Host Comm or AC/CDM (see Women’s luncheon, also expenses related to

registration credit card fees, refunds, etc). Much time wasted discussing such things. Not necessary.

Financial stewardship

There needs to be clearer discussion between AC/CDM and Host Committee on the finances. This is a huge event. Host Committee budgets for certain things and AC budgets for others. Therefore, there needs to be better synergy between the two.

Eg – On Monday of GA we needed to send a last-minute email to all the women who had pre-registered. This is possible to do from within Regfox. And we were sitting with a huge surplus in our budget. But apparently expenses related to Regfox come from the AC budget and we were told not to send this email from Regfox because it would cost about \$70. This created emails and phone calls to finally work out how to make it happen (thank you Ashley from AC) at a time when we were very busy.

Better systems in place

- Avoids unnecessary work, reinventing plans
- Information Center is needed! – de facto info centers were the 2 registration areas – but we did not know how to answer many, many questions...
- Printed schedules for those who are walk-ins and visitors
- An Information center for exhibitors, or knowledge of where to send them. Many came to us asking for information that we could not supply.
- Common answer to our questions was: “You can do it however you like.” Sounds good but we are amateurs who have NEVER organized and run a GA! Whereas the AC has 48 years of experience...

Examples:

- Banner for Women’s Registration – it is a waste of time and money for each city to produce a new one each time. We saw this because we did it twice so we got the banner produced by St Louis and used it. Then we passed it on to the folks from Memphis for next year. This sort of thing should be in the Host Committee manual and should be standard operating procedure.
- Job Descriptions – what they DON’T tell is important. Depending on former GA reports is a waste of time.

- Decisions on refunds. Let Treasurer make (or someone) but conversations and emails back and forth on each case was a waste of time (see Evan Travers section on pre-registration)
- Buying plastic nametag sleeves – was totally confusing as to who should do what in this regard
- Printing nametags – ended up with many duplicates because it was confusing who should do it
- When and for how long should Women’s Registration be open? We were told “Whatever you want.” But we have never done this before!! So we spent time discussing this with Amanda (thank you Amanda for serving so well!) and came up with a plan that was OK, but could have been better if those who have done this for 48 years simply stated in the manual, “Women’s Registration should be open these hours _____.”
- Someone from Children’s activities and nursery MUST be at registration to answer questions. May a few of the general volunteers could be allocated to our registration to direct people where they need to go.
- Have a Sign at Women’s Reg of hours open.
- Keep RegFox for better continuity. We could not ask St Louis about the online registration platform because something different had been used that year. (And RegFox could improve a few things)
- Instructions on how to handle mail in registrations. We figured it out but again it was a big waste of our time.
- “Bulk” discount for large families (suggestion: cap cost)
 - Bad ideas for children (safety concerns) should be recommended against by someone from PCA AC (eg young kids to Splash Pad had to be changed the week before GA!)

On-site payments – we discussed, spent time, not necessary if this was spelled out in advance by the AC

On a different subject: Choosing Preachers for Worship Services – it doesn’t seem right that one person (in Birmingham 2 people) should make this decision that affects the entire denomination. Rather names should be run by the Presbytery for input and decided by the whole Host Committee. Eventually the whole Host Committee in Birmingham did make the decision but only after much discussion and back and forth about the process.

Overall/general information about Women & Children, including budget and coordinating between all these various aspects: **Bobby Parks**, bjparks@briarwood.org (205) 612-9969