



## Stamina, Perseverance, and Patience

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“Stamina, perseverance, and patience.” It was the prayer request of our newly elected General Assembly co-moderators, Elona Street-Stewart, executive of our very own Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and Rev. Gregory Bentley, pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. On Saturday, the 224th General Assembly overwhelmingly elected this co-moderator team on a first vote. Stamina, perseverance, and patience.



The pair will need this as they lead us for the next two years through difficult changes. Anti-racism work tops the list. “The world needs a church that has no fear over its diversity,” Elona Street-Stewart remarked. She is a descendant of the Delaware Nanticoke tribe and the first Native American to serve as the GA moderator. Acknowledging that the PC(USA) already has incredible statements and social witness policies, the co-moderators urge the denomination to be at the center of economic and social change.

Studying, talking together, going to conferences, and serving in organizations led by people of color are all helpful tools for the nearly 90% of Presbyterians who are white, Street-Stewart said. “Let’s come with the attitude that says, ‘You are the ones to be the teachers. Tell us what you are doing,’” she said. It will take stamina, perseverance, and patience to defeat centuries of racism.

Another focus for the co-moderator team is lifting up the [Matthew 25 vision](#). Lakes & Prairies was the first Synod to sign on, and many of our Synod’s congregations have since done the same. In this denominational vision, organizations are asked to commit to goals of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. All are hard work; all are necessary. It will take stamina, perseverance, and patience to see the difference.

In fact, as we look at the challenges ahead of us, individually and collectively, I can’t think of a better prayer. Stamina because it is draining to be on 6 Zoom calls back to back – or to be isolated with no contact at all. Our routines for personal wellbeing are disrupted, and we’re pushing ourselves on a sprint, when really we’re running a marathon.

Perseverance because we start to wonder why any of this matters. Priorities no longer are; patterns are broken; and values are eroded more and more every day. Our call as Christians does not diminish, however, so we pray that we might persevere.

Patience because everyone else is experiencing the same challenges and grappling with them in different ways. We witness anxiety and indifference, over-functioning and withdrawal. Everyone is just trying to survive and to come to grips with our new reality – or maybe they’re unable to face reality right now. Patience acknowledges all of that. It doesn’t excuse wrong behavior, but it offers understanding.

As we pray for our new co-moderators, let’s lift up the same prayer for all of us. We’re going to need it!

