

## ***November Assembly a Time of Transition, Worship, Work & Fellowship***

Commissioners from congregations, ministers, elected leaders of the presbytery, and guests gathered for the fall assembly for a time of transitions, worship, work and fellowship over meals and Bible study. Highlights:

\* **Rev. Kevin Bowers** (Bethany, Lafayette) was elected and installed as Moderator of the Assembly. **Rev. Laura Reason** (First, Highland) was installed as Moderator of Presbytery Council.



\* **Ruling Elder Pam Camren** (First, Mishawaka) was honored as outgoing Moderator of Council and for her extended years of service to presbytery, including Geneva Center.

\* **Rev. Alan Griffin and Rev. Anna Parkinson** (First, Goshen) shared stories of the congregation's responses as a downtown congregation to community needs. Simply opening the building on "First Friday" nights have grown into open meals, shared space, and creative opportunities for sharing the Gospel through its Spirituality Center.

\* **Rev. Robert Shaw** (Christ, Winfield) built upon these stories in Goshen to illustrate how to use the MissionInsite data to identify other demographic opportunities.

\* **Rev. Rebecca Kirkpatrick** (Sunnyside, South Bend) introduced background and new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism as recommended by 220th General Assembly. Presbytery Assembly voted to approve its addition to the Book of Confessions.

\* **Ruling Elder Ann Bingaman**, co-program director of the Ministerial Excellence Fund, and one recipient of a grant told stories of the gift of rejuvenation from mentoring relationships and from grants for tuition loans, medical expenses, overwhelming debt, and wellness subscriptions in support of ministers. Presbytery must provide matching funds under the Lilly Foundation grant to continue this support of ministry.

\* Assembly approved the provisional annual budget for Geneva Center ministry. The 2013 budget includes mortgage payments to the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program for the HVAC and other renovations completed.

\* Financial Consultant **Eric Herzog** (Whitewater Valley) reviewed the first quarterly statement of presbytery's new fiscal year, and informed the Assembly that an 18-month financial review is underway by auditors for 2011 and the first six months of 2012, the year of changeover from a calendar year to fiscal year. Eric reminded

presbyters of the two remaining Financial Workshops.

\* Assembly shared conversations about Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2, worshipped and shared the Lord's Supper, and pondered the Word as spoken by **Rev. Laura Reason** on Ruth as a story of hope, and challenging the presbytery to invest time and attention to visit and articulate its purpose, direction and vision for today and tomorrow.

\* Presbytery engaged in diverse discussion concerning proposal that the presbytery approve a capital campaign to address the under-capitalization of Geneva Center. Speakers noted both the essential needs of GC to be viable, and Council's consensus that Presbytery must revisit and define its own



mission, and the place of Geneva Center in that mission. Assembly approved a substitute motion to hire a Program Director for Geneva Center [without a time line], make the 2008 report of [Lehman & Lehman](#) available [found under Information tab under Forms & Documents on the website], and proceed to a Missional Transformation process for presbytery to define its ministry.

\* **General Presbyter Frank Vardeman** highlighted observations from his first two years with Wabash Valley: the generous mission efforts of congregations into local communities as well as outpourings to efforts such as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; the reflective conversation about the mission of presbytery and the place of Geneva Center in the purposes of presbytery; noting both the dedication and gifts of the cadre of current leaders but the need for addition of new people with new thoughts and ideas; and the sense that when we are together, we are a unified Body of Christ, in spite of seeing a divided church and a politically divided nation.

\* Heard report of University Church, a specialized ministry of presbytery, and its recent partnership efforts in developing leadership, polity, finances, and its capital campaign in support of its PILP funding for building renovations.

\* Assembly honored ordination dates of teaching elders; provided \$448 for Christmas Joy offering; elected seven other ruling and teaching elders to leadership positions; referred proposed changes in bylaws and standing rules back to Council; and adopted

documents listed in the Stated Clerk's report as incorporated into the presbytery Manual of Operations, with commissions, committees and task forces to provide additions and timeline for completion.

The next Stated Assembly will be Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at Geneva Center.  
--From Stated Clerk Linda Long