

Joyous work of the Assembly & Actions Taken by Council

by Linda L. Long, Stated Clerk



After two postponements due to wintry weather and hazardous driving conditions, 94 Presbyterian colleagues gathered in Assembly with **Moderator Kevin Bowers** (TE, Bethany, Lafayette) for an abbreviated but upbeat meeting on a beautiful but cold day. The joyous work of the Assembly included:

- Electing and installing **Jeff Cover** (Teaching Elder and Associate Pastor, Central, Lafayette) as vice moderator for 2013, and several others

to teams, commissions and committees

- Hearing from Inquirer and second-year seminarian **Ken Crews** (First, Valparaiso) about his call into ministry after years in business and industry in his faith journey, and moved him to Candidacy.
- Hearing from **Steve Braden** (HR) and **Carol McDonald** (Synod executive) by video about [The Joshua Journey](#) visioning process and engaging in thinking about decades of history of the presbytery and church, and in conversations about what from the past to bring forward, and what hindrances and burdens to leave behind.
- Listening to mission-co-workers from our presbytery describe and illustrate their ministry of encouraging mutual support among our congregations, PC(USA) World Missions and those of ecumenical Christians of the Middle East, then commissioning their family with pledges of prayer, learning, encouragement, discernment, giving and engaging in advocacy.
- Thanking and dismissing the administrative commission of **Justin Schlesinger-Devlin** (Memorial, Dayton), **Sara Stallings** (Central, Lafayette) and **Paul Myhre** (validated ministry, Wabash College) after finishing its work of transitioning the Fuzzy Bear Preschool of the former Ladoga Presbyterian Church, now dissolved, to an independent ministry as Growing in God Church.
- Considering the report of General Presbyter **Frank Vardeman** who remarked about the sense of joy in the room as Assembly addressed matters of ministry, mission, and vision; his gratitude from the prayers, patience and pastoral care he received following his knee surgery; and eager anticipation of the September Assembly retreat with Professor **Rodger Nishioka**, professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia, as worship leader and keynote speaker.

- Voting without dissent to table a motion to remove a minister from rolls of presbytery.
- Being surprised by a parade of speakers celebrating the blessings of the Confirmation Retreat and gratitude for initiative of **John Van Nuys** (TE, Wabash Ave., Crawfordsville) and others who led 14 confirmands through the previous weekend retreat; generational linkage between a Wabash College professor who is donating his library to the same seminary as where the mission co-workers will be stationed; the commitment of **John Ritchie** (TE, First, Huntington) to serve as summer camp director at Geneva Center; several gifts to Geneva Center; anonymous donation of time-share housing in vacation spots for pastors on first come, first serve basis;
- Closing with worship together, with liturgy led by **Nancy Brinklow** (RE, Presbyterian Church, LaPorte), sermon on the Garden of Decision by **David Wood** (TE, First, Crown Point), and Lenten hymns accompanied by **Jeff Carter** (TE, Hobart).

Following a brief break with a sack lunch, Council gathered with **Moderator Laura Reason** (TE, First Highland) at 1 pm to conduct business primarily as Board of Directors of the presbytery. In addition to conversations in executive session, Council took the following actions:

- Advised administrative commission for Faith, West Lafayette and negotiating team for Church of the Good Shepherd, Winona Lake on dismissal settlements.
- Approved request for First, South Bend to sell a piece of unused property.
- Approved concurrence with request of trustee for Eileen Louise Lee Trust for payment of his attorney fees for the interpleader action to determine appropriate beneficiary of her bequest.
- Directed staff to obtain a binding purchase offer for the former Ridgedale church property in South Bend.
- Approved paying 1/3 of costs alongside other two Indiana presbyteries to support Faith Group Breakfast for Presbyterian Association of Clinical Pastoral Education conference in Indianapolis in May.
- Approved \$5,000 Peacemaking Fund matching grant for First, Merrillville to support its "feeding the Flock" mission.