Presbytery Assembly…Unity and Reconciliation

*by Stated Clerk Linda L. Long*

One hundred twenty-six of us gathered at Geneva Center last weekend with beautiful early-fall weather to learn about experiences of Christians in the Middle East and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, and to worship and celebrate the Lord's Supper, take care of our ecclesiastical business, and share meals in fellowship.

* On Friday evening, **Dr. Atef Gendy, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo** and New Testament scholar and leader in Synod of the Nile, told stories and answered questions for an hour about living as a minority religion, and the urgency of addressing the real needs of people, particularly Christians, in Egypt.  He distinguished most practicing Muslims from the political extremists focused on power and violence.  Dr. Gendy urged Christians to move beyond their walls to share what they are able: "hungry people need crumbs...Move beyond your walls to your community, into the city, across the nation, and into the reality of the world beyond..."  He told stories of remarkable forgiveness by Christians living out of their faith and practicing trust in God.  Presbytery was gifted with a plate with the Lord's Prayer in Arabic, joining the tapestry with Psalm 23 in Arabic, as symbols of our ongoing relationships in Egypt.
* Presbytery's Transformational Ministry Team recognized with gifts of crosses crafted by **RE Harold Gray** the **20 churches that walked "The Journey of the People of God"** in seeking to refocus and transform their ministry with the support and leadership of **15 coaches**.  Several congregations shared stories of how ministry has moved outside their walls, expanded study of scripture, built relationships among churches in a region, personal changes, and clearer priorities for Christian witness through service.
* Accepted reports of substantial work by three commissions:  Ministry, Preparation for Ministry and Council.  Assembly received reports of commission for First, Plymouth and Thorntown, and charged a commission to work with Calvary, Logansport.
* Assembly was attentive to sermons in worship provided by **candidates for ordination Sarah Gengler** and **Amy Cornell**.  Sarah preached on Mark 10, recounting how we witness to others to see Jesus through simple acts of kindness.  After

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| Photo Compliments of Rev. Chuck Compton  Amy Cornell & Sarah Gengle |

* presentation by Commission on Preparation for Ministry and examination, Sarah Gengler was approved for ordination and installation to Brookston Federated Church.  Amy Cornell preached from Luke 15, taking the perspective of the "Parable of the Enduring Father" who lived out forgiveness that assures us "nothing will make God stop loving us."   After examination, Amy was approved for ordination into validated ministry as campus pastor of Whites Residential & Family Services in Wabash, IN.
* Surrounded by members of her congregation, **Ruling Elder Jody Burks** was commissioned as pastor to Bethel of Shannondale, Crawfordsville, during worship.
* Received report of **Joshua Journey 2** team charged with recommending action concerning Geneva Center and its role in mission of presbytery; and proposing a revised structure for presbytery work with congregations.  Their recommendations are to begin restructure January 2015, to be completed July 1, 2016; spin-off Geneva Center into its own non-profit corporation; name **Frank Vardeman** transitional presbyter; and form two teams for transitions, the GC Transition Team and Restructuring Implementation Team moderated by Frank.
* Elected **Jill Kitowski** (RE, La Porte) as moderator of Assembly and **Jeff Cover** (TE, Central, Lafayette) as moderator of Council, to be installed at November Assembly; **Bill McLean** (TE, Delphi) and **Ann Bingaman** (RE, congregation transfer pending) as Synod Commissioners; and Catherine Moran (TE, Immanuel, Schererville) to serve on COM.
* Elected **Jan Sandos** (RE, Rossville) as moderator of Nominating Committee; **Jim Dougans** (CRE, Rensselaer); **Hank Cox** (RE, Christ, Winfield); and **Kristi Slaby** (RE, Rensselaer) to Nominating Committee for its ongoing work.
* Approved **2015 minimum effective salary** for full-time teaching elders at 69% of church-wide median salary ($38,226) and for full-time CREs ($30,580).  Also approved policy that **congregations will continue to provide Board of Pensions dues for medical care for pastor's spouse and family** unless covered by other sources and approved by the pastor.
* Heard stories of **221st General Assembly** from presbytery's four commissioners, **Judy Friend** (RE, Peru), **Jill Kitowski** (RE, La Porte), **Tom Albaum** (TE, Monticello) and **Bill McLean** (TE, Delphi).
* Dissolved relationship with specialized ministry of University Church, Purdue at its request and upon recommendation by Council.
* Received report from **Stewardship Ministry Team on the fiscal year financial report** for Presbytery and the current status of Geneva Center.  Although expenses were 4% below budget, income was $53,183 below budget and presbytery ended its fiscal year with $79,575 deficit.  There was a drawdown of the Corporation Fund by $11,856 in spite of Synod's refund of $50,000 provided to University Church; and a drawdown of Council's Action Fund with $36,493 transferred to Geneva Center and $799 for a retirement celebration.  Current unrestricted net assets (reserves) total $487,535 on June 30, 2014.  Geneva Center is currently showing a deficit of $24,802 in its operations and a drawdown of $19,942 in its capital reserves.
* Engaged in lively discussion of 1Peter 4:8-10 and teased out implications for us as a presbytery of covering each other's sins, practicing hospitality, and serving out of our spiritual giftedness.
* Your generous contributions of $531.50 was collected for Peace and Global Witness (formerly Peacemaking)