Council Brief – Sharing Insights and Praying Together

On Tuesday, August 19th, Council Moderator Kevin Bowers called fifteen elders to order at Geneva Center, and after reading I Kings 17: 8-16, sharing insights and praying together, conducted the following business:

* Approved proposed Congregational Stewardship Assessment Survey to accompany statistical reports for 2014, to assist with planning training, congregational support and presbytery planning.
* Approved invitation to incoming **Synod Executive Sara Dingman** to speak to the November Assembly and invitation to General Assembly leadership or staff to speak to February Assembly.
* Approved motion to begin planning a special presbytery event for May 2015 to focus on small churches, hearing success stories and addressing concerns such as towns with declining populations, aging buildings, possibilities for shared ministry, financial planning, assessing congregational viability and other challenges for small congregations.
* Heard report from **Stewardship Ministry Team** that the total dollar cost of Geneva Center in the Presbytery operating/mission/reserves funds during the last 5-years (2009-2013) averages $119,423 annually (this does not include PWV staff support). This amount includes payments for mission support, building/common area use, and "extra" funding of deficits in 2009 and 2014. For 2013, the amount was $141,449 including the transfer to balance the GC operating fund.  Presbytery deficits exceeded $80,000 for the last two years. Without additional funding that deficit is likely grow to $120k in 2016. While the presbytery has about $500,000 in reserves, we are required to maintain a $300,000 balance.  This means that with a projected shortfall of $120,000 a year that we have less than 2 years of funding.
* Voted 6-5 not to affirm the restructuring model for presbytery as presented by **Joshua Journey 2 team** after more than an hour of questions and discussion. Basic outline as proposed to Council has six Assembly meetings per year normally meeting in churches, three coordinators and Stated Clerk each at one quarter time, trustees for property matters, Frank as Transitional Executive during transition, no Council, no General Presbyter, and sale of Geneva Center or spin-off of it into a 501(c)3 organization."
* Concurred, in response to letter from **Calvary-Logansport** announcing its desire to be dismissed to another denomination, with plans to prepare a team with specific authority to be delegated by the Assembly to work with Calvary on a dismissal process and agreement.
* Agreed to recommend that the Assembly concur with the request of University Church Board President **David Carmichael** to dissolve the specialized ministry relationship with the Presbytery of Wabash Valley in keeping with efforts of that worshiping community to redirect its ministry and worship location.
* Received written reports from COM, CPM, General Presbyter, Stated Clerk and Thorntown AC, and approved minutes of July 15, 2014.

- Linda Long, Stated Clerk