

# Celebrating God's Grace

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Linda L. Long, Stated Clerk

Presbytery Assembly gathered February 23rd and packed the dining room at Geneva Center. Our work, worship and celebrations were woven together by Moderator John Ritchie into times of getting acquainted, celebrating God's grace as shared through Bible study, personal confessions of failure to live out the Gospel with assurance of forgiveness and charges throughout to live out a Forgiven lifestyle.

We engaged around tables in study and discussion of Deuteronomy 7:6-9. One question for shared reflection was "Imagine...what this would look like lived out as a community of faith communities in the Presbytery of Wabash Valley?" Some responses:

- What if our calling involved more than creating and maintaining physical spaces? How can we organize ourselves around acts of charity? Can we? Charity defined as acts of care and compassion. Clarity of identity is crucial to a congregation, and to a Presbytery!
- Like today's gathering. Maybe sometimes antagonistic to those outside our circle...
- Emerge from suspicion, move to concern/care/support/partner. Effectiveness together.
- Remembering we are loved, moving above and beyond our disagreements/hurts/frustration with what has happened on the floor of Presbytery. Moving forward in love to make God's love and will visible in the world.
- WOW and backwards WOW! No ACs, unlimited possibilities.
- Every church matters. Don't overlook contributions of small churches. Each church should be appreciated for its contribution to its own community.
- No fear of the future. Be more connected to each other. Wouldn't worry about dying off or out. We would know there are things that cannot be shaken. We would be more accountable to each other as a covenant community.
- Be together in the transformation process.
- All-inclusive love to everyone. All equal. Growing and learning always.
- Fewer ACs? Fine line between grace and law.

Some key actions:

- Introduced Geneva Center Acting Director **Larry Kalas**
- Welcomed at least fifteen new pastors, elders, and visitors to Presbytery Assembly.
- Shared the Peace of Christ, not only with handshakes and hugs, but also with "**E-vangelism**." For a moment, John pulled out his cell phone and invited each to email or text or call someone to say God loves him or her.
- Celebrated retirement of Rev. **Stanley Kessler** and granted Pastor Emeritus status with the Ogden Dunes Community Church to Rev. **Nancy Becker**.
- Heard the Word of God from Deuteronomy in the words of Interim General Presbyter **Ray Fancher**. He challenged the Assembly, like Moses and the Israelites during their "40 year interim time," to come to terms with history, let go of baggage we don't need, and pick what is vital to carry forward as we move into a new identity as God's people. "You must be confident about who has been leading this Presbytery—God—, and God is faithful to his people... Presbytery is underway with transformation God has been calling you to be...day by day we discern what that means for us."
- Commissioned lay pastor and Elder **Martha Flora** to the First Presbyterian Church of Albion.
- Gathered gifts of \$549.60 for **One Great Hour of Sharing**.
- Examined and approved for ordination Candidate **Vanessa Syvertsen**, who has received a call from the congregation of Lima Presbyterian Church, Howe.

- Elected **Jamie Miller** as moderator of Administrative Ministry Team; **Jerry Egger** to the Permanent Judicial Commission, **David Smith** to Committee On Ministry, **Rose Taul** to Committee on Preparation for Ministry, **Laura Smith** to Committee on Representation and **Steve Mullin** to the Nominating Committee.
- Received 2009 end of year financial report from **Eric Herzog** for Presbytery and approved 2010 budget for Geneva Center.
- Recognized the churches and coaches who have launched the first wave of the Journey of the People of God.
- Took time for table talk and written notes about administrative commissions.
- Clarified specifics of the charge to the administrative commission for Ladoga.
- Were reminded again of the opportunities at the [Kaleidoscope Stewardship Conference](#) in Indianapolis March 15-17, the [Youth Triennium](#) July 20-24 on the Purdue campus, and the **Michiana All Peoples Church** probe.

Next Assembly meeting is April 27th at Calvary Presbyterian Church, Logansport. Again, we will offer a brief orientation for elder commissioners before the meeting.