

Presbytery of Wabash Valley
Summary of 8.23.11 Council
By Linda L. Long, Stated Clerk

Council opened its session yesterday with vigorous and spiritual discussion of the missional transformation scripture for August, the Lilies of the Field passage at Matthew 6:27-34. Several major issues were the focus of Council conversations and decisions:

1. Council unanimously voted to recommend to the Assembly that the University Church be received as a specialized mission ministry of our Presbytery, in keeping with the bridge proposal worked out with Council's task force (Rev. David Horner, Elder Ron Miller, Rev. Kevin Bowers) and approved by the University Church board of directors and Council. That four-page framework will be distributed with Assembly documents later this week.
2. On behalf of the Synod and in keeping with our joint stewardship of Synod property, Council approved the scope of work and project schedule for renovations of the HVAC systems at University Church. UC has had no central heating system since last mid-winter and temporary measures are no longer permissible. Our Stewardship Ministry Team member and experienced engineer Bob Porter has been pivotal in assessing and coordinating the specifications and contracting, to be supported by a Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program loan to the Synod, present owners of the UC property. Previously, Council has approved the formation by our attorney of a LLC subsidiary of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley corporation to receive from Synod the legal transfer of property and mortgage for the pending PILP loan.
3. Council approved the engagement of the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center Association's Consultants' Network for the purpose of leading structured, Presbytery visioning about its mission and vision, including but not limited to Geneva Center. Rich Swartwood, director of the successful Pyoca Camp and Conference Center in Whitewater Valley Presbytery, will serve as lead consultant for six sessions with the Presbytery Visioning Team, the Geneva Center Ministry Team and others. It is the present intent of Council and Frank Vardeman that Frank will continue to manage the staff of GC until we answer, "What is the vision of the mission and ministry of Presbytery?" and "How does the Geneva Center resource best fit that mission and ministry?"
4. Council approved a Policy for Conversations with those Considering Separation from the PC(U.S.A.) and will send that to the Assembly for adoption. It anticipates a Reconciliation Team to work in community through mutual conversation with those who have concerns about the differences and the potential for reconciliation. If after dialogue, the Team and congregation are not able to establish a process for remaining in community as PC(U.S.A.), they will plan a process in partnership for dismissal to another Reformed denomination or other future steps.

Other action items:

- Dismissed the Communications Task Force, particularly Paul Myhre, with thanks now that the audio-visual upgrades are in place.
- Heard report from COM concerning its approval of Rev. David Lawrence (camp program director this past summer) to serve a new outreach ministry emerging from and financially supported by the Westminster and Memorial congregations in South Bend.
- Referred draft budgets back to the Stewardship Ministry Team for revisions and presentation for its first reading at the September Assembly, to add a component of financial partnership between congregations and Presbytery. This step acknowledges the need to restructure operations and refocus resources during the next year to attain a balanced operations budget.