

## "Shining Eyes" Were at the November 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly *New Focus Statement is Adopted*

Gathering in Assembly on a cool, calm day after regional tornados two days before, our presbytery members talked, prayed, sang, elected and otherwise:

- Listened to updates on the Joshua Journey visioning process and adopted its focus statement to shape the ongoing mission of presbytery:
  - Nourished by the living waters of Jesus Christ,**
  - We awaken, enliven and enhance worshipping communities**
  - To courageously extend their branches and bear new fruit in the Spirit.**
- Were blessed by Moderator Kevin Bower's sermon on the Scripture guiding the discernment of presbytery work, Rev. 22:1-2:
  - Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God ... On either side of the river is the tree of life ... producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.**
  - This part of John's vision is "lush and comforting; images of healing and life giving water, but hold a challenge and call to all who would call themselves Christian."
  - If God's new creation on earth includes giving life and healing nations, what does this mean for Presbytery of Wabash Valley to engage in mission and ministry that is life-giving and promotes healing among our communities and among nations?
  - Life giving water is a gift from God; channel it or carry in buckets or stay out of the way and don't restrict the flow.
  - Healers of nations take risks and engage the world, to work for the freedom of the oppressed, care for the poor and inform, speaking truth to power.
  - Quoting his friend Peter Storey, "When you walk into a local church you are looking at God's best idea for mending the entire universe...The church is viable only with its boots on the ground...The most important gift the church can give the world is to be different from it."
  - "The only way the *Joshua Journey* will be any different from other visioning processes that come and go without making a change... the only way [we] will be fruitful is if we allow God's vision of a new heaven and a new earth to captivate us and to call us into a new way of being...to begin to work in ways that are life giving and for the healing of the nations."
- Experienced the work and life of Joshua, Rebecca and Owen through their video story and interview as their ministry seeks to heal nations.
- Elected its commissioners to the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly that will consider the ministry and mission of the PC(USA) in 2014: Jill Kltowski (RE, The Presbyterian Church, LaPorte), Judy Friend (RE, First Presbyterian Church, Peru), Bill McLean (TE, First Presbyterian Church, Delphi), and Tom Albaum (TE, First Presbyterian

Church, Monticello), and alternate Larry Biggs (RE, Lake Station Community Church).

- Installed its officers: Assembly Moderator Jeff Cover (TE, Central, Lafayette), Council Moderator Kevin Bowers (TE, Bethany, Lafayette), Vice Moderator Jill Kitowski (RE, The Presbyterian Church, LaPorte), and Stated Clerk Linda Long (RE, First, Valparaiso), and honored outgoing Council Moderator Laura Reason for her three years of leadership as an officer.
- Re-commissioned ruling elder Tim Reyna (First, Valparaiso) to pastoral service for First Presbyterian Church, Portage.
- Elected a slate of leaders for committee, teams and commissions of presbytery.
- Met Ed Thompson (Regional Rep and TE, Heartland Presbytery) and learned about current and anticipated changes by the Board of Pensions, as well as the benefits conferred upon congregations and their pastors.
- Celebrated ministry of five pastors who are or will be honorably retired this year: Chuck Compton, Wayne Rhodes, John Everett, Linda Skaggs, and Doug Mankell.
- Caught glimpses of the Big Tent Conference last August through stories told with “shining eyes” by Andy Betts (RE, Sunnyside, South Bend).
- Received a variety of reports, and in particular heard from General Presbyter Frank Vardeman that a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) team will be visiting Indiana’s tornado-damaged areas to assess damage and plan relief, and will be hosted by Faith, Kokomo.
- Wrapped in prayer those present to engage those in need by being “new” in ways that are life giving and for the healing of nations.

*Next Stated Assembly is Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. at Geneva Center.*