

Dr. Rodger Nishioka Captures Assembly with "Radical Hospitality" Topic

Rodger Nishioka preached the Word with "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love" from Luke 14 and Hebrews 13, naming "Radical Hospitality" as the message for the people of Presbytery of Wabash Valley. Dr. Nishioka drew upon stories, sometimes with humor, sometimes with ethos and pathos, based upon his experiences as a Japanese American "PK" (pastor's kid) to engage the Word with those gathered for worship and the Lord's Supper Friday evening. He reminded all that "worship is not about you," "worship and hospitality are not transactional" with expectations of payback, and an illustration of moving from airport isolation into smiling community without words. There were at least 65 presbyters gathered for dinner and worship Friday evening.

Moderator Kevin Bowers called the Assembly of nearly 100, including 25 guests, to order Saturday morning with welcome, prayer, and introductions. Dr. Nishioka continued his theme of radical hospitality into his keynote address and dialogue with presbyters. Staff will post the video of his presentation for presbytery use, but some highlights:

- What does it mean to take risks for Christ? The Church of Jesus Christ is not about power; it's about risking for the gospel.
- Time is the most precious commodity today. Sharing time is a gift.
- Research shows that #1 reason visitors return to a church is because they were received warmly, not for the preaching, music, convenience, politics or theology. They value being greeted, they "want to experience Jesus" with authenticity.
- Referring to Phyllis Tickle's book, *The Great Emergence*, Rodger used her image of an every-500-year rummage sale to illustrate stories about sorting of what to keep, and what to get rid of in the church.
- Drawing upon Diana Butler Bass's work, Dr. Nishioka traced the "re-traditioning" of Christ's Church, seeing not the end of the church, but shifts into new expressions of being Church. He illustrated eight trends he sees today with lots of facts and stories. Look for the video (in a week or so) of his presentation, if you want to know more.
- Finally, he told stories of experiments in hospitality as ways to accommodate the ever-changing needs of people in the church, ranging from hunger for the spirituality enhancing old traditions, the "smells and bells" of years past, to a church that removed the back ten rows of pews as an experiment to make room for rocking chairs-and parents with babies and the grandparent-types who filled those rocking chairs weekly.

Dr. Nishioka captured the Assembly with his presentation, but the Assembly also:

- **Renewed three year commissions** of ruling elders for continuing pastoral service and celebrated with their congregational members in support of those ministries: **Jene McVay** - Milligan, Crawfordsville; **Donna Enersen** - Pleasant Hill, Frankfort; **Jeff Brown** - Faith, Kokomo; **Ed Fabrici** - First, Kouts; **Rick Ryan** - Elston, Lafayette; **Roger Hartzler** - Lake Station Community Church; **Judi Geistlinger** - Marshfield, Williamsport; **Barbara Wirt** - Sunnyside, South Bend; **John Beehler** - Bethel, Union Mills; **Anella McFee** - Meadow Lake, Wolcott; and **Jim Dougans**, recently commissioned to First, Rensselaer.
- Examined candidate **Sarah Bishop** and approved her ordination and installation as associate pastor for **First Presbyterian Church, South Bend**.



Sarah Bishop Preaching

- Examined inquirer and third-year seminarian **Kellie Griffin Tracz** and affirmed her sense of call by advancing her to candidacy for ministry.
- Elected a panel of presbytery leaders nominated as commission and team members, moderators and Stated Clerk.
- Engaged in review of **Joshua Journey** visioning process and reflected by writing notes about the proposed Biblical image and focus statement. Presbyters were

invited to participate in the next retreat day at **Geneva Center on October 19th.**

- Received a letter from mission co-workers from our presbytery sharing their experiences.
- Received final report and **dismissed with thanks the administrative commission** charged with acting on behalf of the presbytery to complete details of the agreed dismissal of Faith Presbyterian Church, West Lafayette.
- Celebrated giving of congregations and received final fiscal year report for June 2013 for presbytery and mid-year financial report for Geneva Center.
- Heard about the August workshops on Stewardship, Church Financial Reporting and Church Management sponsored by **Ministerial Excellence Fund** that served 51 people from 18 churches.
- Heard about "**Feeding the Flock**," an example of churches working together in shared mission in NW Indiana.
- Acknowledged thirteen transitions in pastoral leadership of congregations, and information for congregations to follow up concerning [healthcare reform update options](#) from the Board of Pensions.
- Heard about the **UKirk ministry** for students on the **campus of IU in Bloomington** from **Karen Hahn**, daughter of the Peru congregation, who encouraged others to let IU students know they are welcome.



Rev. Jeff Cover, Linda Long, & Kellie Griffin Tracz

Vice Moderator Jeff Cover closed the assembly with prayer at 2:45 pm. You are welcome to join the next Stated Assembly at Geneva Center on Tuesday, November 19th, at 10 am EST.

- Linda Long, Stated Clerk