Council – All that God has guided

Council Moderator **Jeff Cover** (TE, Central, Lafayette) led seventeen Council members in study of the discernment of The Council at Jerusalem as reported in Acts 15, and to draw some conclusions about our own Council's work for 2015.  Major actions taken:

* Announced Referral Team of Five appointed to consider of presbytery structure, transitional presbyter and implementation team, with report due to Assembly on February 24, 2015.  They are Moderator **Sara Dingman** (Transitional Executive for Synod of Lincoln Trails); **Kevin Bowers** (TE Bethany, Lafayette); **Jim Dougans** (Transitional CRE First, Rensselaer); **Sue Babovec** (Chaplain, Peabody Retirement Community); **Sandy Carlson** (RE, First, Michigan City), and General Presbyter **Frank Vardeman**.
* Invited congregations to join minister members and elder commissioners of presbytery together on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 with General Assembly Vice Moderator **Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia** and our 221st GA Commissioners for worship, a meal and conversation about the proposed amendments from GA and what it means to be the Presbyterian Church (USA).
* Generated list of presbytery members with range of expertise to serve as Geneva Center Transition team and named GC ministry team moderator **John Ritchie** (TE, Huntington) as moderator.  Team is tasked with coordinating the details of transition including personnel and property matters, development of a business plan for Geneva Center, addressing legal issues of incorporation and transition including but not limited to the specific type of not-for-profit corporation, PILP loans, relationship and its structure of the new Geneva Center to the presbytery and the PC(USA).  Regular updates will be provided to the Council and Assembly to allow time and openness for the Presbytery to have input and buy-in to the process, decisions and actions.
* Received reports from commissions for Winona Lake and Calvary, and approved recommendation of the Thorntown AC to transfer the church building by quitclaim deed to a local resident who is creating a not-for-profit organization to maintain the building as a community center.
* Encouraged members of other presbytery congregations to worship with the Thorntown Presbyterian Church on Sunday, December 28, 2014, at 2 pm EDT to celebrate its 180 years of ministry and mark its closing.
* Reviewed financial report for presbytery, noting that only 66 congregations are supporting our connectional mission, administrative staff and volunteers working on behalf of 84 congregations, demonstrating again the need for restructuring presbytery costs to reduce continuing deficits currently funded by presbytery reserves.  Expenses are below the budgeted amounts, but contributions are even lower than anticipated funding from congregations.  Council extended the previously approved 2014 six-month budget through June 2015.
* General Presbyter **Frank Vardeman** thanked Council, staff and others for the prayers and pastoral care during his recovery from surgery, and encouraged engagement with the new pastors coming to congregations in Wabash Valley to broaden and deeper presbytery leadership.
* Approved proposal from Personnel Committee to close Geneva Center and presbytery office's from Christmas Eve through January 2, 2015.
* Received appointment of task force to reconsider our current dismissal policy, to be moderated by **Sally Wicks** (TE La Porte), with **Jordan Truman** (TE, Kendallville), **Quincy Worthington** (TE, Westminster, Munster), **Mike Munson** (RE, Deer Creek), and **Mary Rasp** (RE, First, Elkhart).
* Received resignation of **Jill Kitowski** (RE, La Porte) as moderator of Council's property committee, pending naming of a new moderator.
* Closed with prayer at 2:45 led by **Paul Myhre**.

Next Council meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2015, at 10 am EST at Geneva Center.

- Linda Long, Stated Clerk