



WHITWATER  
V A L L E Y  
P R E S B Y T E R Y

## Whitewater Valley Presbytery Assembly Highlights

February 4, 2017

The waters ran deep and wide at our presbytery assembly Saturday, February 11, where we were graciously hosted by Irvington Presbyterian Church. Receiving the special offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, provides \$1,189 for disaster assistance, hunger relief and empowerment of poor and oppressed communities. Thanks be to God!

Starting the day with worship, our preacher was a guest from the Presbyterian Mission Agency who serves as the Director of Theology, Formation and Evangelism, the Rev. Dr. Chip Hardwick. He dove head first into the story from Matthew, chapter 20, of the vineyard owner who paid day laborers the same amount, a full day's pay, regardless the number of hours each had worked. Sharing the story of a Nigerian Christian who had been threatened with violence as he was turned away from all-white churches in the United States he showed us what a high price an immigrant, a person of color, would pay for a place at the table of our Lord. Listeners were challenged to admit that we who are Caucasian are the laborers who are paid well for the least work performed.

Thus, our year of immersion in the Belhar Confession began.

We were privileged to commission five of the nine team members traveling to our partner congregations in southwestern Dominican Republic this week. (February 18-24, 2017).

Two candidates for ministry from within our presbytery were approved for ordination to positions in Whitewater Valley. Jennifer Lipinsky will serve as Associate Pastor at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Fishers and Maureen Wilson as Temporary Supply Associate Pastor at Irvington Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis. Each have been well-nurtured in their callings and professional development by Second Presbyterian Church as well as they congregations they'll serve.

All of the amendments to the Form of Government, both the Book of Order and the Directory of Worship were passed by the body. [Amendment Voting Results](#). Camp PYOCA's bylaws were amended to allow greater diversity and increased membership on the Advisory Council.

Commissioners and Pastors met in three different groups to reflect upon one of the three foci of the Belhar Confession: unity, reconciliation and justice. After reading and discussing the related section of the confession in a lectio divina style, they answered the questions:

If our presbytery were to focus on maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, what might that look like? OR

If our presbytery were to focus on the work of reconciliation, particularly as it relates to the separation of people by race, color, culture and language, what might that look like? Or

If our presbytery were to focus on the work of justice and righteousness, as proclaimed in scripture and confession, how might we pursue that goal?

Just back from an educational trip lead by the Presbyterian Hunger Program in partnership with the fair trade company, Equal Exchange, Tom Harton, Jenni Heimach and Peggy McDonald shared an overview of the experience, including their enthusiasm for promoting US consumption of fairly farmed and processed coffee, tea, oil, chocolate and nuts. A video overview is available on the presbytery website, and the travelers seek invitations to support all our congregations in our presbytery.

First Presbyterian Church, New Castle, and their Clerk of Session, Jim Millikan, were recognized for being the first church to submit their statistical report so received a Golden Pen award. Commissioned Ruling Elder, Mr. John Miller, was recognized as he begins his commissioned service to First Presbyterian Church, Liberty.

The meaningful day ended with the annual visit from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program by Jim Rissler, President. As occurs each year, he returned dividend checks to our congregations and shared the good news of the program's capital investment across the country.

On May 3, commissioners and pastors will assemble at Witherspoon Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis to explore the Belhar Confession theme, Unity. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Leah Gunning Francis, author of *Ferguson and Faith* and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Christian Theological Seminary.