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## Conference Minister Report

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*The greatest of these is love ...*

*1 Corinthians 13*

*Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now. There are three things that will endure—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.*

*—1 Corinthians 13:12-13 NLT*

How I would like to see with perfect clarity! If only my mind's eye had 20/20 vision, I could make good and right decisions at all times. In this first year as your conference minister, I've needed to make many decisions, and with my imperfect vision, I'm certain sometimes my decisions were not good and right. But then, even if my tenure with you lasts for many years, my vision will still be imperfect. And I'm sorry to tell you that your vision is also imperfect. Ah—but the good news is that God knows each one of us perfectly!

God knows us perfectly, thoroughly, accurately, completely. This God who knows calls us to aspire to the three things that will last forever—faith, hope, and love. Faith: the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. Hope: joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation. And love: brotherly and sisterly love, affection, good will, benevolence. God calls us to these high aims. Of them, the very greatest is love. Jesus gave us a new commandment—to love each other like Jesus loves us. This is how the world will know that we are disciples of Jesus. (John 13:34-35)

I believe that when we love as Jesus calls us to love, we can forgive when our less-than-perfect mind's sight causes us to make imperfect decisions. Indeed, 1 Peter 4:8 tells us that love covers a multitude of sins!

One of the joys I experience in this position comes in visiting congregations across Allegheny Mennonite Conference. Each congregation is unique, with its own history, people, context, and worship style. Yet I have found God's Spirit to be present in each one I have visited. Only rarely do I witness the results of imperfect decisions, but I would be surprised to find any of our congregations without some memory of times when love was needed to work through the results of decisions that had been made. Praise God for such a gift of love!

We need this kind of love throughout Allegheny Mennonite Conference as decisions are made to the best of our abilities and understandings. We need this kind of love within congregations and between congregations. I praise God for the gift of love that has been with us in the past. I believe God will continue to bless us with love as we, together, seek God's best intentions for Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

Donna Mast, *Conference Minister*

*Calling people into a transforming relationship with Jesus and His Church*