

Allegheny Mennonite Conference
Leadership Council Retreat
January 15-17, 2016

The Leadership Council of Allegheny Mennonite Conference met January 15-17, 2016 at the home of Kathy Holsopple. The following were present: Joy Cotchen, Conference Minister of Children and Youth; Marvin Friesen, Moderator-elect; Kathy Holsopple, Conference Administrative Ass't.; Chris Lehman, Johnstown Region Representative; Tim Mock, Treasurer; Phoebe Sharp, CLC Representative; Cathy Spory, Moderator; Olivia Tennefoss, Youth Representative; TJ Tennefoss, Eastern Region Representative; Wayne Yoder, Casselman Region Representative; and joining the group on Sunday morning was Emily Kaltreider, Youth Representative.

Friday, January 15th

Cathy Spory called the meeting to order encouraging everyone to share a joy for the day. Council read orally Conference's covenant. Cathy had asked Council members to each share sometime throughout the weekend a favorite verse, song, and a reflection on where your place to find and be with God. Marv Friesen shared in a devotional time.

The minutes from Council's September 3, 2015 meetings were reviewed.

ACTION: Marv Friesen moved that the minutes be approved as submitted, Wayne Yoder seconded, motion carried.

Council reviewed the reflections from the statement: *Since our March 7, 2015 Faith and Life gathering, I've been feeling...* which were gathered at the November Faith and Life Gathering. The following were some words that were heard in those reflections: conflicted feelings, sadness, hope, anger, winning or losing, near sightedness, new things will divide us, self righteousness, blaming, judgment, being judged, disappointment in leadership-church-pastor, salt, acceptance, safe space.

Cathy Spory then asked council members: *Where are you with your feelings as to where we are as a conference right now.* Here are a few of the feelings shared: must hold on tightly; have an open mind what could be; sense of relief that the weight has been lifted; energy but aware that some congregations are still deciding; excitement that it will look different; the sadness is how can we have good closure; a fish out of water; was once a big ship, now we are just in life boats waiting to be rescued.

The meeting was adjourned for the evening.

Saturday, January 16th the group was called to order by Cathy Spory. Members each shared a name of someone who influenced them and why. Cathy and Wayne Yoder shared in devotions to start the day.

Cathy and Marv gave an update on interim conference minister's search process. The search committee is: Cathy Spory, Marvin Friesen, Eric Haglund, J. Lorne Peachey, and Phoebe Sharp. Feedback was given as to what kind of person and what we expect the job priorities to be.

Congregational updates: Cathy and Marv updated council on the status of congregations. They are going to meet with a certain congregation in the next few weeks to listen and help where they can.

Here are some immediate needs that will need to be taken care of in the next few weeks:

1. Spring Faith and Life Gathering - March 5th; Spring Minister's Study - April 25-28; Pastor Peer - March 15th; June 14th Pastor Peer Picnic; Celebration of Congregations and Conference - August 5-7.
2. Credentialing committee has dissolved. Until an Interim Conference Minister is hired, Cathy Spory and Marv Friesen will oversee needs. It was mentioned that Pastors are still suppose to complete an accountability plan by June 1st.
3. Keeping connected with congregations and pastors/congregational leaders is important. Two congregations are in pastoral search.
4. The Interim Conference Minister's search committee will meet next week. They will be in touch with council on a perspective candidate when the time arises for approval.

Tim Mock, Treasurer, distributed a proposed budget to council which showed where we are to date on this year's budget and two options for a new budget. Each line item was reviewed. There was some discussion on items and the budget was tabled until later in the weekend.

The conference office space was discussed and the possibility of moving to save on finances. Kathy Holsopple and Tim Mock answered questions stating that even with Jim Rosenberger's offer of cutting the rent in half, with utilities and parking, we would still be paying double of what we are being offered at the Penn Traffic Building.

ACTION: Olivia Teneffoss made a motion to move the conference offices to the Penn Traffic Building and open new bank accounts with a bank in Johnstown. TJ Teneffoss seconded, motion carried.

Cathy Spory will write a letter to Jim Rosenberger thanking him for all he has done for conference, including buying the building 3 years ago. Kathy Holsopple will inform Darrel Holsopple that council has approved the move. The move is scheduled for March 15th, starting at 1, after the morning pastor peer. Kathy Holsopple will open up the new bank account with the help of Tim Mock.

Chris Lehman and Olivia Teneffoss shared in devotions followed by a lunch break.

Meeting resumed with Tim Mock sharing in devotional time.

Cathy Spory undated the council on the nominating committee and where they are at with preparing a slate for the March meeting. Names for Moderator-elect, Treasurer, and Western Region Representative were suggested and Kathy Holsopple will pass the suggestions on to Julie Swartzentruber, chair of the nominating committee. Names were suggested from the Casselman Region for the nominating committee opening. Joy Cotchen will contact the suggested names.

MCC Representative: With the resignation of Ryan Lehman as Allegheny's Mennonite Central Committee Representative due to a location move, Cathy Spory has contacted one person with the person declining. Another name was given to her that she will contact

Sister Church report: There was really nothing to report as this project seems to have lost interest with the Chair person moving.

International Guest House report: TJ Tennefoss reported that things are moving along smoothly and that they are always looking for volunteers. It was discussed that we own the IGH property and should we be looking at the financial future of conference and possibly making some changes. After some discussion no decisions were made.

World's Attic report: Wayne Yoder, also a member of World's Attic board, reported that they now have their own Fed. I.D. number and are no longer using Conference's and they are working on becoming a 501c3.

It was then discussed about what we, as a council, would tell our interim conference minister. Council is aware that there is a need to be realistic with our finances in the hiring process. The job description for interim conference minister was reviewed.

The afternoon was spent visioning for the future of AMC with many visions shared.

Kathy Holsopple and TJ Tennefoss shared in devotions that led into a break for dinner.

The evening was a continuation of visioning with much discussion and coming up with the top six:

1. What would happen if we open our doors to new relationships? (other churches & conferences)
2. AMC - a safe and vulnerable space - a desire with Jesus as our guide
3. Forbearance being practiced
4. More involved in missions
5. Excitement
6. Upholding what unites us

March 5, 2016 Faith and Life Gathering: It was decided that since it should be a congregation in the Western Region that Pittsburgh Mennonite Church would be asked to host the meeting. Agenda items were reviewed: Budget, Ballot, Search Committee report, Roll call, and some ideas for the afternoon were mentioned. Phoebe Sharp will help coordinate with Pittsburgh's pastor Dave Swanson on the worship time and the layout of the day after Cathy or Marv contact Dave and get approval.

August Celebration suggestions: Suggestions will be taken into considerations when the planning committee meets. The committee is Marv Friesen, Chair along with Joy Cotchen and Kathy Holsopple who will meet in the next month.

Phoebe Sharp closed the evening with her devotional time.

Sunday, January 17th

Discussion on the budget continued with Tim as he presented the amended budget. It was discussed about this being the last year for budgeted support for the BNCP. Marv or Cathy will contact the support committee and remind them of the agreement that conference moves from budget and designated to just designated. It was mentioned about the budget being at the bare minimum to present to delegates and that it will be up to them to make changes.

ACTION: Phoebe Sharp made a motion to approve the amended budget to present to the delegates. Chris Lehman seconded, motion carried.

The next meeting of Leadership Council will be April 14, 2016.

There was worship time led by Joy Cotchen which included communion. A very meaningful time was spent to close our weekend together.

A thanks was given to everyone and to those who brought food.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Holsopple