

Leadership Council  
of Allegheny Mennonite Conference  
September 4, 2015

The Leadership Council of Allegheny Mennonite Conference met on Thursday, September 4, 2015 at the conference office in Somerset, PA. The following members were present: Joy Cotchen, Marvin Friesen, Kathy Holsopple, Karen Howard, Chris Lehman, Donna Mast, Tim Mock, Phoebe Sharp, Cathy Spory, T.J. Tennefoss, and Wayne Yoder. John Davis, Emily Kaltreider, and Olivia Tennefoss were absent.

Cathy Spory, Moderator, welcomed Donna Mast, Conference Minister, to open the meeting with a time of worship. Donna shared from the *Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book* on week 2 the *Beatitudes: Blessed our those who mourn*. Council used this devotion throughout the evening meeting.

Cathy welcomed a new incoming Council member Phoebe Sharp. Also new this year will be Emily Kaltreider and Olivia Tennefoss. Cathy thanked Karen Howard for her past 4 years of service.

Cathy asked Council to review Donna Mast's resignation letter and there was a time of sharing thanks, concerns, fears, and affirmations.

Cathy read a list of congregations who have withdrawn since Council's last meeting, they are: Blough, Canan Station, Carpenter Park, Glade Gortner, Oak Grove, Pinto, and Tressler. It was mentioned that conference is holding two of those pastor's membership and credentials. It was mentioned that there are a few congregations that we are not sure of their plans at this time. It was suggested that if we don't hear from them and they don't attend delegate meetings, that a letter be sent to those congregations.

Donna has talked to our MC USA denomination rep, Nancy Kauffmann about if a congregation withdraws and someone from that congregation is on this Leadership Council, should they resign. Nancy's recommendation is that individuals be allowed to finish out their term, if they so desire. Conference's parliamentarian, Enos Tice, reviewed the bylaws and said there is provisions for this scenario in which conference may hold an individual's membership up to two years. Leadership Council agreed with Nancy Kauffmann's recommendation that those wanting to serve out their terms would be able to. Council is supportive of individuals who would like to stay connected with conference. Joy Cotchen, Conference Youth Minister, asked Council about sending out information to the congregations who have withdrawn to youth events such as retreats. Council gave Joy their blessings as she continues to invite the youth from withdrawn congregations.

Tim Mock, Conference Treasurer, reported that our funds are only \$2,000 off of the projected budget but we are only two months into the new year. It was brought up that Laurelville will need to know if

Conference will continue to pay \$25.00 per AMC campers soon. Joy remains in contact with Laurelville and will pass information onto them.

**ACTION:** Marv Friesen, Moderator-elect, made a motion to continue paying the conference discount to Laurelville for 2016 summer camps. It was seconded, motion carried.

Conference has a line of credit for \$25,000 that conference pays \$125. every two years to keep it open. It was decided since it is renewal time that we close the line of credit.

The Moderators are proposing that no major decisions be made for the next year, such as cutting staff time, conference dissolving or joining with another conference. Council can continue to look at office space and hiring a 1/2 time interim conference minister.

Bob Brown, Pastor at Stahl, presented a study of scripture's call for inclusion and how we can help congregations with resources. This is for understanding and not agreeing, a study on forbearance. People who have agreed to serve on this committee are: Bob Brown, Matthew Hunsberger, Cindy Lapp and Steve Sauder. Dan Hertzler has agreed to help in editing. The time frame would be similar to the series study, 13 weeks, with a title something like "our story towards inclusion". After a question and answer time, it was decided that this would be a good resource and that it should be developed.

Cathy stated that Donna Mast has resigned as Conference Minister as of December 31, 2015 and that Council received a copy of Donnas' letter. The moderators updated Council stating that they will begin looking for a part-time person asking them for a term of 12-15 months with a possible extension. Names were suggested to serve on the search committee along with the moderators. Cathy will contact those mentioned to form the committee.

MCC East Coast rep., Ryan Lehman, has resigned because they are relocating. They meet twice a year. Names for a replacement were suggested and will be contacted.

Office space is being looked at to help with the financial struggles. A letter will be sent to our landlord, Jim Rosenberger, so that he is aware that we are looking at other options.

Neal Weaver has renewed our website domain for another two years.

CLC meeting will be held October 19-21 in Archbold, Ohio in which Donna will be attending.

Leadership Council Retreat January 15-17, 2016. It was decided to keep it simple. Council is looking to meet possibly at Kathy Hollsopple's' with Council members staying with other Johnstown Council members for lodging.

November 7th Faith and Life Gathering will be held at Stahl Church, Johnstown, PA. It was discussed that we enjoy our meeting time together. Suggestions were given to the Moderators as to what possible items could be discussed.

Staff reports were to include joys, reflections, and challenges:

- A. Kathy Holsopple, Administrative Assistant, reported that joys were that her husband got a good health report and that their daughter got married over the summer. Reflections are the office has been quiet and that there have been times over the years that was true but maybe for not as long of a time. It has been emotional removing congregational names and delegates with whom she has worked, shared, worshiped and communed with. After listening to the spring meeting to review some points she mentioned what a good job, Cathy, Donna, Marv, and Tim did as they led the day. Challenges: getting information from the remaining churches who still may not be sure what their future with Allegheny will be. Going for the mail which can be good and bad. Waiting to see what the Lord has in store for conference and keeping spirits up.
- B. Joy Cotchen reported that joys were having 3 grandchildren living in the area, her husband has a new job, her youngest grandchild has juvenile diabetes and that the family has pulled together to learn how to live with all the testing on a daily basis. The youth cabinet met in August and they bring her hope. Challenges: the youth are not being heard when congregations are making decisions, they don't all agree but they have learned forbearance. Reflections: Summer camps were great with 190 campers - 100 were AMC kids, it was an exhausting summer but it was good.
- C. Donna Mast reported challenges: saying goodbye is tough, has taken an emotional toll on her, scheduling can be challenging, pastor retreat needs to happen and planned with no committee. Reflections: she has wonderful people to work with, thankful for Leadership Council and their support. We are church together, if you want to walk fast walk alone, if you want to walk far walk together. The pastors in Allegheny have been great and it hurts when they separate. Joys: this summer she worked with students in a class at BNCP and that she has been in conversation with MMN about the possibility of support help for the BNCP; there have been 3 ordinations (Eric Haglund, Wes Yoder, and Keith Yoder) and one more coming up the end of September (Randall Schlabach). The credentialing team will meet with two candidates in the next few weeks. She was able to celebrate her parent's 70th wedding anniversary with family.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed with a devotional time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Holsopple