

Leadership Council Retreat
Leadership Council
January 16-18, 2015

The Leadership Council of Allegheny Mennonite Conference met January 16-18, 2015 at Camp Harmony, Hooversville, PA. The following were present: Joy Cotchen, John Davis, Marvin Friesen, Kathy Holsopple, Karen Howard, Leslie Hunsberger, Chris Lehman, Tayllor Lehman, Donna Mast, Tim Mock, Cathy Spory, TJ Tennefoss, and Wayne Yoder.

Moderator Cathy Spory opened the weekend sharing that the goals for the weekend are 1) listening to the Spirit; 2) working on the recommendation from the RDC to be presented to delegates; 3) working on a budget to present to delegates; and 4) learning one new thing about each member of our group.

Throughout the weekend each Council member took a turn sharing a scripture and song that meant something to them.

Council read as a group the recommendations from the RDC. Throughout the weekend there were several time periods of sharing, review on the Fall Faith and Life Gathering, work done on wording recommendations, thoughts, scriptures read, discernment, and prayers as the Council came to agreement on the what recommendations should be presented to the delegates at the Spring Faith and Life Gathering on March 7, 2015. It was decided that delegates should sign their ballots at the very least with the name of their congregation and Council would recommend that delegates sign their own name. Delegates will register by signing in upon arrival and the vote counters will have a list of each congregation and how many eligible votes are available. This will eliminate anyone who is a guest from voting. Questions were raised about a majority vote vs. a two thirds vote. Enos Tice, who is AMC's parliamentarian, will be contacted on some of these details. The discipline in 2005 was passed with a majority vote. It was discussed whether to hold regional meetings before the March meeting and it was decided not to hold regional meetings prior to March 7th.

Tim Mock, conference treasurer, reported on the distributed reports. Items were discussed about keeping the same or lowering certain line items. There was much discussion on where the funds will come from to meet the proposed budget.

- The Bhutanese-Nepali Church Pittsburgh also asked that conference put in the budget a line item to support them for the coming year, asking for \$49,000. Their three-year support plan is coming to an end. After much discussion it was decided to put it in the budget at half what they are asking for a total of \$24,500 and let the delegates decide if it should be a budget item. If the delegates vote no to supporting them then conference

cannot support them and they will need to find funding elsewhere. The support committee for BNCP should report at the March meeting.

- A question was asked about selling the International Guest House for funds. This question will be tabled until later in the weekend.
- It was decided to remain at our present Somerset building for our staff offices and pay rent for another year.

On July 31, 2014 Donna Mast's term as Conference Minister was up and the delegates confirmed her for one year. Now the one year is up again and we will not be having a summer *Celebration* to decide on this. It was decided to bring a recommendation from Leadership Council to extend Donna's term for another one year to July 31, 2016 to the delegates at the March meeting.

The nominating committee is still working on a slate for a CLC rep and Casselman Valley and Johnstown Regional reps. Leadership Council needs to come up with replacements for the nominating committee for Johnstown and Eastern regions. Suggestions were given and will be contacted.

Sister churches are aware of who they are paired up with but some of the congregations have not gotten together yet.

International Guest House: Annabelle Kratz is retired and will be moving. TJ Tennefoss reported that the board is looking for a replacement. It has been mostly staffed by the larger Mennonite Church. Congregations from Ohio and others outside AMC have been volunteering. Council asked what is the mission and vision of IGH and its relationship with Allegheny. TJ will continue to work with the board on answering Council's questions.

The Global Summit for young adults will be July 17-19 at Messiah College . A question was asked if conference wants to ask young adults to represent AMC at this event. Can we send something to congregations making them aware of this event? After discussion, it was decided to ask Julianna Tennefoss and Naomi Tice to head this up.

Sunday morning there was a worship service led by Donna in which each Council member participated. During the service there was a time of a communion.

March Faith and Life Gathering. Hyattsville has offered to host this meeting. Upon looking at the rotation, it is Casselman Valley's turn. It was decided that we would ask Springs to host.

Highlighted were the items for the March meeting:

- the budget
- Bhutanese-Nepali Christian Church reporting

- elections
- the process of the recommendations
- closing worship
- World Conference update
- Global Youth Summit update
- ask the delegates to approve Donna's term for another year.

It was decided that Council will meet prior to the delegate gathering for prayer.

It was agreed that the delegate information will be sent out as emails to the delegates with the exception of Red Run. One copy will be mailed to Red Run's pastor asking that they make copies for any of their delegates.

Council again took one final look at the 3 (if needed) recommendations and made a few minor changes. It was mentioned that dissolving conference can't be looked at as a negative thing, it could birth something new. It was decided that Marv, Cathy, and Donna, with the help of Enos, will tweak the wording on the three recommendations that will be given out to delegates, with Leadership Council looking over the changes, if needed. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Ask the delegate body if we are willing to live together with theological disagreements. If the answer is yes, then the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective is used as a guiding document, not a disciplinary document, and we restore Hyattsville into full membership in AMC. 51%

2. If the answer is less than 51%, then: ask the delegate body if we are willing to remove Hyattsville and other congregations at variance with the membership guidelines from membership in AMC. 66%

(Any congregation required or choosing to leave AMC can request and receive assistance from the current LC in finding appropriate affiliation. Remaining congregations will restructure the conference to meet the new realities.

3. If the answer is less than 66%, then: ask the delegate body if they are willing to dissolve AMC. 66%

(Leadership Council guides the process, providing care appropriate to each congregation. A service of remembrance and thanksgiving for the many years of ministry that happened through Allegheny Mennonite Conference would bring this conference to an end.)

The Council was unanimously in agreement that they could live with the three recommendations.

Cathy thanked Council for being present in the weekend. She shared that we have prayed, cried, laughed, and shared to get where Council stands at the conclusion of the weekend. Although tough work was done, the weekend was good.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Holsopple
Administrative Assistant