

Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC)
Leadership Council (LC) minutes from Retreat Jan. 17-19, 2014
MCC Welcoming Center, Akron, PA

Present: J. Lorne Peachey (Moderator); Cathy Spory (Moderator-elect); Donna Mast (Conference Minister); Joy Cotchen (Minister of Children and Youth); Tim Mock (Treasurer); Kathy Holsopple (Administrative Assistant); Karen Howard (Constituency Leadership Council [CLC] Representative); Wayne Yoder (Casselman Valley Regional Representative); T.J. Tennefoss (Eastern Regional Representative); Chris Lehman (Johnstown Regional Representative); Carrie Eikler (Western Regional Representative); Dallas Hetrick and Aaron Dunmore (Youth Cabinet Co-representatives); Nancy Kauffman (Denominational Minister, Mennonite Church USA [MC USA])

Friday, January 17, 2014: Session I

- 1) Reconnecting: Lorne Peachey introduced and welcomed Nancy Kauffman and Tim Mock to council. Everyone introduced themselves and told why they serve on LC.
- 2) Worship: Led by Nancy using 1 John 4:7-21. God's love and ours.
- 3) Minutes September 12, 2103 Leadership Council meeting:

Action: The minutes from the September 12, 2013 Leadership Council were approved as submitted.

- 4) Review of agenda: Lorne presented an updated agenda for the weekend.
- 5) Review of November 2, 2013 Faith and Life Gathering: The minutes were reviewed discussion followed:
 - a) Received a lot of positive feedback about the meeting. People said they appreciated hearing from Shalom, the Bhutanese Nepali Church, International Guest House (IGH), and World's Attic. It was mentioned that it was meaningful to pray after each mission's presentation.
 - b) There was discussion on when to have an open mic time at delegate sessions. It was suggested that it is helpful for delegates to feel their voice is being heard.
 - c) Donna Mast reported on the brainstorming part of that meeting. She opened by reading an article from the Indiana-Michigan Conference newsletter *Gospel Evangel* by Jane Stoltzfus Buller, Conference Moderator, entitled *Living into the Peace of Christ*. The article centered around Matt. 10:24: "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."
 - d) Donna shared suggestions made during the brainstorming and compiled the ones mentioned five or more times:
 - i) have sister congregations;

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- ii) reinstate prayer calendars (Carrie Eikler said she would be willing to work on this);
- iii) have pulpit exchanges;
- iv) use social media for sharing gifts, ideas that work, worship resources and posting events (Aaron and Carrie will work at the spring Faith and Life Gathering and summer Celebration to get e-mails addresses to help facilitate this suggestion);
- v) have shared missional activities.

Donna distributed updates of the Purposeful Plan from Mennonite Church USA

Saturday, January 18, 2014: Session 2

- 6) Worship: led by Nancy using the 1 John 4:7-21 passage. She wanted us to know deep within our souls that God loves us.
- 7) Finances: Introduction of Tim Mock as the new treasurer for conference, filling out Ken Litwiller's unexpired term. Tim told the group he holds a degree in accounting from Shippensburg University and is employed by Laurel View Village, Davidsville, PA as controller.

Action: To appoint Tim Mock to serve the remaining 2 ½ years of Ken Litwiller's unexpired term as conference treasurer. (unanimous)

He received an unanimous affirmation by Council to fill the unexpired term of Ken Litwiller and will serve the remaining 2 1/2 years.

- a) Lorne presented a year to date report
- b) The 2014-2015 budget was drawn up by Lorne, with input from staff, in the absence of a treasurer. After reviewing and discussing the budget the following were noted:
 - i) Line 14 (Contribution to MC USA), will keep the conference giving to 10% for MC USA. Lorne will send an e-mail to MC USA regarding our desire to have some indication about what the denomination expects from area conferences with relation to financial support.
 - ii) Line 30 (EMU Advisory Board); we agreed not to participate any longer in the travel pool whether we send someone or not.
 - iii) Line 31 (Leadership Council travel and misc), it was decided to increase the \$1,000 another \$200 for a line total of \$1,200.
 - iv) Line 33 (CLC travel expense), this line item total remains the same as this past year (\$1,500) but with the suggestion that we decrease sending three persons to two. After some conversation it was decided that the elected CLC representative and the Conference Minister will be the two to attend.

Tim Mock made the suggested changes and reprinted correct copies which were reviewed at another session.

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- c) Lorne presented a chart with each AMC congregation and their number of members, their total giving from 2006-2012, an average per year giving, an average per member giving for 2012-2013, the per member giving for that time and whether the amount was up or down from the previous 6 years. We will need \$18 more this year per member to make up the budget deficit. The Conference Treasurer will communicate with congregational treasurers the need for increased giving. We celebrate those congregations that make giving to conference a budgeted priority. We will ask at the March delegate meeting how many active participants each church has so we can more realistically reevaluate per member giving.
- d) Trust funds/reserve
10% of Donnas' salary was taken out of the mission directed trust fund in December for her work with Shalom and the Bhutanese-Nepali Churches. Lorne suggested we combine multiple reserve fund accounts, given what is possible in consideration of legal and moral issues on some funds. Tim will bring a proposal back to the Council.

ACTION: To approve the budget as revised for presentation to the delegates on March 1, 2014.

Session 3

- 8) Review of current structure:
 - a) Council review: looked at what had been the old and new structures, then discussed positive and negatives. It was noted we went to the new structure to save money and because it was difficult finding persons to serve on commissions and committees. Saving money allowed us to have a full time conference minister.
 - b) Summary of staff discussions: staff likes having a full time minister. Joy noted that she is comfortable with being 50%.
 - c) Summary of pastors' input: Some pastors noted they would like one credentialing committee so that there would be more uniformity throughout conference. Donna agrees with that suggestion. Donna suggested that the committee be made up of four credentialed persons.
- 2) Proposing changes: Tim Mock would like trustees/financial advisors. Tim will bring names to LC for feedback and approval.
- 3) Updating bylaws and structural document: Karen Howard volunteered to work with Enos Tice on updating the bylaws and structural document.

Session 4

Joy Cotchen led in an opening prayer.

- 9) Office location: Cathy Spory will check with Jim Rosenberger about the possibility of renting less space. Since the rent is budgeted for 2014-15, the office will remain in our present location through 2015. We need to give a 6 month notice if we should decide to move.
- 10) Archives: Chris Lehman will check with MC USA Archives to see if they are interested in anything from our archives and what their recommendation would be on what to save and what could be given back to the churches. Chris will work on starting to downsize the two rooms of archives at the Somerset office.
- 11) Reconciliation:
 - a) Update from Reconciliation Discernment Committee: Donna reported what the committee felt was appropriate for her to share from their meetings.
 - b) Handling schedule pressures: The committee has met twice but find scheduling meetings challenging. One committee member Barb Root, is relocating and can no longer serve. She will be replaced by Anna Sauder.
 - c) Goals and process: The question of how long this process will take is a difficult one but no time line has been set.

Session 5

- 12) Long-term sustainability: It was discussed what we might do to have conference continue. After much discussion Lorne proposed we continue on the present track with a full time minister, the RDC process, and the office in Somerset. We also will look at the possibility of forming several ad-hoc committees and continue as outlined above until our reserves are between \$30,000 and \$50,000.
- 13) Review on budget and structure
- 14) March 1st delegate gathering. The Faith and Life Gathering will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2014 at Scottdale Mennonite Church, Scottdale, PA. from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. It was decided that if an offering were taken it would go for a special project. This adds to the joy of the day.

Session 6

- 15) Worship: Nancy shared 1 John 4:7-21. She had us think about loving others and what this means?
- 16) Follow up from previous agenda: World Conference will be held in Harrisburg, PA July 21-26, 2015. Donna and Lorne shared World Conference (WC) experiences and the joys in attending. Cathy Spory will look into ways we might help as a conference. Could we serve as *Leadership Council meeting Jan 17-19, 2014*

ushers, helping to park cars or other tasks? She will also check to see if the WC Committee is considering Johnstown and/or Pittsburgh in Assembly Scattered. This is a time when smaller groups go out into communities and stay with local families. We decided as LC to not hold Celebration 2015 so that people can use their time and funds toward attending WC. It is estimated that between 12,000 and 15,000 will attend. We want to get Allegheny Conference excited and involved in this!

- 17) Open discussion: ideas, brainstorming, concerns: Council spent time brainstorming about things we could envision for our conference if we had unlimited resources.

Sunday, January 19, 2014 Session 7

- 18) Worship: Nancy again had 1 John 4:7-21 read reminding us that God loved us first. Every worship time we sang songs about God's great love for us.

- 19) Nominating committee report: Lorne read the slate from the committee listing for Marvin Friesen as moderator-elect (affirmation) and T.J. Tennefoss or Carl Geissing as representative from Eastern Region for Leadership Council (election). Council, responsible for the Nominating Committee, is bringing the names of David Garber and Julie Swartzentruber as a representative from Western Region to the Nominating Committee (election).

Discussion on what keeps persons from volunteering for leadership positions. We thank the nominating committee for their hard work.

ACTION: To accept the slate as submitted.

- 20) Conference Children and Youth Minister review: Joy's term will be up June 30, 2014.

Review questionnaires have been set out to youth leaders from each congregation and cabinet members. They are due back 1/22/14. They will be looked at by Lorne, Donna and Cathy Spory

- 21) Representative to MCC: we need to fill our vacancy left by Ken Litwiller, moving out of the country. They meet two times a year and MCC pays their expenses. The length of term is 3 yrs. with indefinite number of terms. Names were suggested by the council.

- 22) *Anymeeting.com*: we hope to use this site as a way to conduct meetings via the internet.

Lorne led us in an experiment. Due to the closeness of being in the same room, there was a lot of feedback. We will have another experiment on February 5th from our homes at 8 pm.

- 23) Next Leadership Council meeting: It was decided to have our next physical meeting April 10 at 4 p.m. at the conference office in Somerset. We will then meet on July 10, 2014, at 3 p.m. at Somerset.

- 24) Other:

a) World's Attic (WA): Donna has sat on the WA board to see them through their time of transition to a paid manager and now will come off due to her heavy work schedule.

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Wayne Yoder is on WA board and will act as a liaison to council. Thank you Donna for your time spent in this capacity.

- b) Tax exempt: It was noted that WA, Johnstown Service Adventure, and IGH all use the conference tax exempt number. Tim will look into this with the ad hoc committee.
- c) Philippi Service Adventure is taking this year off but will have one this coming year, operating on a year to year basis.
- d) Karen Howard shared that Pittsburgh Mennonite has decided to be a “welcoming congregation” and have worked at revising their covenant to reflect this.
- e) International Guest House (IGH) is looking for another board member since Annabelle Kratz is anticipating moving out of the area. T.J. also reported the present host couple at IGH will serve a second year.

Recorded by Chris Lehman