

Leadership Council
of Allegheny Mennonite Conference
September 18, 2014
at Somerset, PA

The Leadership Council of Allegheny Mennonite Conference met on Thursday, September 18, 2014 at the Somerset conference office. The following were present: Joy Cotchen, Marvin Friesen, Kathy Holsopple, Leslie Hunsberger, Karen Howard, Chris Lehman, Donna Mast, Tim Mock, Cathy Spory, T.J. Tennefoss and Wayne Yoder.

1. The meeting was opened with a welcome by Moderator, Cathy Spory who introduced the two new council members present which were Leslie Hunsberger and Marvin Friesen. Cathy shared a brief description of her life as we start this new Council year working together.
2. Donna Mast read scripture from Luke 24:13-35 which is the scripture theme for the MC USA convention next summer in Kansas City, MI. Donna led council in a devotional time.
3. Review of Celebration: Cathy Spory asked the group to share some likes about our Celebration weekend and here are a few that were shared: liked that we hear from pastors, talent show a good way to get to know people, liked having three different speakers, liked having a young adult as one of the speakers, having communion on Friday evening, liked the music and worship time, heard that God's church will continue, etc. Here are a few of the suggestions for things that may have been done differently: assigning the young adults to do games and then held a time for the Reconciliation Discernment Committee to share when some of the young adults along with others wanted to do both, sometimes it is hard to choose between seminars, put signatures on the questions presented to the RDC, conference is always a downer because we always talk about sexuality, etc.
4. Staff Reports: Cathy Spory asked staff to share one joy and one struggle with their jobs
 - A. Joy Cotchen, Minister of Children and Youth, shared:
 - Summer camps are always a big joy
 - her healthcare cost came down which is saving conference money
 - Challenges will be working with new staff at Laurelville since Angela Dietzel resigned.
 - Naomi Tice is writing curriculum for camps for next year

- Youth cabinet is meeting Sept. 20-21, and will be attending Kaufman church Sunday morning as they plan for Youth Fall-o-wer's Retreat which will be held Nov. 21-23.
 - Her husband Pat will be joining her at the end of the month as she attends youth ministry council in New Jersey and from there they will have a week's vacation.
 - A personal joy is that they have added two grandchildren to the family this year.
 - A struggle would be to keep her in prayer as she discerns her vision and focus.
- B. Kathy Holsopple, Administrative Assistant shared:
- That many joys happen when she connects and fellowships during Celebration at Laurelville and the relationships that have formed.
 - A big struggle is now that we are emailing information to delegates, what happens when a few congregations never send in their congregational forms that list their delegates and email addresses and those who don't have emails and the pastors who don't pass on the information.
- C. Donna Mast, Conference Minister shared:
- A joy is that she and Conrad are going to be grandparents again
 - Since the beginning of March she has shared a sermon with congregations and has worshiped with them and she was well received.
 - It's a joy to work with the Bhutanese Nepali Christian Church of Pittsburgh and to see how they are thriving.
 - It was inspiring to be with the RDC group as they worked together.
 - Struggles have been working with the tension across conference and to get work done that is needed and not be forgetting items.
5. Finances:
- a. Tim Mock, conference treasurer, reported that with just being in the first two months of a new year it is hard to judge where we are at. He wanted to meet in executive session after this meeting to discuss salaries.
 - b. Donna Mast reported on the Bhutanese Nepali Christian Church of Pittsburgh. There was sharing of the BNCP at Celebration about what kind of support they could expect. An email was sent out as a reminder and she heard from two congregations. When people committed to support them at the beginning it was for a three year period and we are currently in that third year. Donna reported that money has been taken out of the mission fund to make their needed monthly total. They are relocating their church to Crafton. This Lutheran church has agreed to let them use it for free with the help of paying utilities. They will be holding classes on how to obtain green cards and driver's licenses. ***It was decided by Leadership Council that Donna go to the support group and ask them to bring a proposal /recommendation to Council on how they are planning to continue to support this project.***

6. By-law changes and affirmation of Pastoral Team

The council looked at possible bylaw changes at the last meeting and a few suggestions were discussed. However, we need to put in place a new pastoral team and cannot wait for the bylaw changes to be approved. We will ask Enos Tice and Karen Howard to continue to work on bylaw changes.

Council approved the recommended Pastoral Team as presented by Donna Mast.

7. Reconciliation Discernment Committee (RDC) Proposal report:

Marvin Friesen reported that there were 8 members on this committee, 4 from Allegheny (in which he was one of them) and 4 from Hyattsville. They have come up with a recommendation (recommendation attached to the original minutes) to present to Leadership Council to do with and when as they see fit. The group did represent the broad spectrum, over the course of the year to work to have the kind of conversations that would built respect for each other. There was a value of worth having conversations around the table face to face. There was a hurdle of distrust in the group that they worked with at the beginning. One question is does Leadership Council accept this proposal to take to the delegates or do we wait until next summer to see what MC USA is proposing? Since Council just received this proposal within the past 24 hours and it is hard to process it so quickly. The process is as important as the outcome. It was decide to not present it in November but state to the delegates where Council is at in the process.

8. Delegate Meeting: The fall Faith and Life Gathering will be held at Barrville. The fall meeting is an optional meeting but due to the RDC recommendation and keeping communications open it was agreed to hold the meeting. Council will try to make it an encouraging uplifting day with sharing stories.

9. 2015 Summer Gathering of AMC: Marv Friesen will chair this from Leadership Council to possibly plan a one day/evening event at World Conference in Harrisburg.

10. Wayne Yoder reported on World's Attic success. They would like to have a bigger space and they are looking at another building. There would need to be major construction to get usable so they are still looking at options. The council thanked Wayne for being Council's representative with World's Attic.

11. Retreat Plans: The retreat will be held January 16-18, 2015 and the details are still being worked on for a location. This will be the next meeting for Council.

12. Mennonite World Conference: It was reported that Joyce Hall would be our representative and she is recommending that Allegheny sponsor one or two young adults to attend Global Youth Summit adults (18-30) meeting at Messiah College July 17-19. Joyce could present this to the next delegate meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Holsopple