

Moderator's Report

"Every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask-----ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory--- to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing Him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so you can see exactly what He is calling you to do...." Ephesians 2:16-18 (the Message)

Our theme for Celebration is **Centered in Christ**. Paul reminds us throughout the book of Ephesians that what we know about God and how we live out those beliefs frequently becomes fractured. Realistically we recognize that there are very few "bones" in our bodies that have escaped injury, there are few relationships in our neighborhoods, in our jobs, schools, churches, or country that are not out of joint or limping in pain. Healing comes only as we move closer to the healing Christ center.

And so Paul goes to work showing how Jesus is eternally and tirelessly bringing all the brokenness together. It is a "long range plan in which everything will be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth." Ephesians 1:10 (The Message)

Four years ago the Leadership Council, moved by the Spirit, recommended reviewing the fracture of Hyattsville and AMC. A Reconciliation Discernment Committee was established and following two years of intensive work their recommendations were presented to the delegates. From those recommendations the Leadership Council proposed three possible resolutions.

At the March, 2015, delegate session the resolution reinstating Hyattsville as full participants in AMC passed by a 72-70 vote. One "break" was set for healing.

But the fracturing was not over. During the next months twelve congregations determined that to live faithfully to their call of being Centered in Christ they needed to withdraw from AMC. It was with deep sadness that the delegates recognized those withdrawals.

It is imperative that in the middle of pain we are drawn to a focal point, a centering point.....Jesus Christ. So as we walked toward that Christ center together during this past year.....

- many of us attended MCUSA Assembly in Kansas City last July
- many of us attended Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg last July
- the Leadership Council envisioned six priorities and invited delegates to dream and expand that vision
- Donna Mast, after so capably serving as our Conference Minister, is excitedly exploring new ministries. Her work among us was both supportive and encouraging and our appreciation is deep and sincere; nonetheless she has been called to walk with still others toward the Christ center. She ended her work with us on December 31, 2015.
- David Mishler began an eighteen month Interim Conference Minister position on July 1, 2016. He will assist us as we imagine and pursue new realities for AMC.

Del Glick who grew up in AMC and is now a pastor at Washington Community Fellowship in DC preached a sermon entitled....."The Mind-boggling, Mundane, and Messy Thing called Church." We are, indeed, wading through murky waters, but he concluded by saying what I would reiterate, "there is no where else I would rather be and I hope that is true for all of you."

May grace, joy, and peace flow through us to the world.

Cathy Spory, Moderator