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I Kings 19 (NRSV)

¹¹ The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Greetings, Sisters and Brothers of Allegheny Mennonite Conference!

During the Leadership Council retreat in January we spent some time reflecting on the I Kings 19 passage. Despite the incredible experience that Elijah had days earlier, now he was hiding from Jezebel and needed to learn again how to listen to God. Sometimes God did appear in the fire (e.g., Moses and the burning bush). However, in this case God spoke in a small whisper. Our prayer is that we as individuals, and as a Conference, will be alert and listening for God.

You are invited to gather on Saturday, March 3, for our spring Faith and Life Gathering of AMC delegates and guests at Stahl Mennonite Church, 1201 Soap Hollow Rd., Johnstown, PA 15905.

Stahl Mennonite will lead us in our morning worship. During the day we will have a chance to listen to the stories from two AMC congregations - sharing joys and challenges, along with hopes and dreams for the future. We will also discern together: 1) an appropriate budget for AMC, 2) changes to our bylaws and organization documents (see page two), and 3) who should serve on Leadership Council and the Nominating Committee. There will also be an offering designated for the AMC budget/operating expenses. Enjoy some fellowship time before the meeting starts and during lunch. Please be in prayer for this meeting and read the related documents that will be e-mailed/mailed with this letter. Then, come prepared to participate in our discernment process.

In Christ,

Enos Tice (Moderator), LeAnne Zook (Moderator-elect)

Attachments (sent with this cover letter):

AMC Spring Gathering Agenda 2018
Budget 2018-2019
November 4, 2018 Minutes
Nominees for election (will be sent later)

Spending Plan Narrative
Appendix 1 [Region Edit]
Bylaws of AMC
Conference Organization

Calling people into a transforming relationship with Jesus and His Church

The Leadership Council is recommending amending our bylaws and Conference Organization document to better reflect our current realities (e.g., fewer churches) and the current vision and direction of Allegheny Mennonite Conference which includes hopefully inviting other congregations to join us. Note that in the documents referred to below, the red text that is underlined represents text we are suggesting be inserted, red text that is struck through represents text that we are suggesting should be deleted. Below we list some of the rationale and the proposed amendments to the bylaws and Conference Organization document.

1. Proposed changes regarding regions:
 - a. As can be seen in Appendix 1 [Region Edit] in three regions there are only two churches remaining. With fewer churches, and because the regions no longer serve the original purpose, Leadership Council is proposing that regions be deleted from our organizational documents.
 - b. In the bylaws see lines: 44 and 46
 - c. In the Allegheny Mennonite Conference Organization document see lines:
 - i. 31
 - ii. 79
 - iii. 134; 137
 - iv. 150
 - v. 186-202
2. Proposed changes regarding qualifications and joining Allegheny Mennonite Conference:
 - a. Earlier there was discussion of having a renewable covenant model of membership. Leadership Council decided to not pursue that **at this time**. Instead, Leadership Council is proposing updating the qualifications for being a member and clarifying the process of becoming a member.
 - b. In the bylaws see lines:
 - i. 9-10
 - ii. 17-19
 - iii. 61-103
3. Proposed changes regarding holding membership of individual people:
 - a. If a congregation withdraws or dissolves, individuals may request that Conference hold their membership for up to two years. There occasionally are extenuating circumstances that may merit extending this two-year period. Leadership Council is proposing that in some cases this could be extended.
 - b. In the bylaws see lines:
 - i. 119-123
 - ii. 137-138