

#1 – Faith & Life Gathering set for March 6 at 10:00 AM via Zoom



No, you are not remembering incorrectly that the last Miscellany came out less than two weeks ago! This news update is happening now to help prepare delegates for the upcoming virtual meeting on the first Saturday of March. You should find important information here and in email attachments soon to come that will guide you into the content of the meeting. Our Spring session is normally about affirming persons for conference roles as recommended by our nominating committee, and reviewing a budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year (July 2021 to June 2022)

Because of our unusual circumstances on several fronts (lack of clarity because of the pandemic and the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the International Guest House property), we have some important additional matters to think about together this year.

#2 - Proposal for distribution of a firstfruits tithe

I will summarize a proposal from our pastors' group which reflects our thinking about sending a tithe of the IGH proceeds to the larger church, a decision authorized by our delegates in November as part of the plan for faithfully stewarding these resources. Our pastors suggest that we assist our national church in expanding its racial justice work by supporting the Mennonite Church USA "Justice Fund" with the largest portion of our tithe (for more information see - <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/the-justice-fund/>). Support for immigration ministries and making a payment to first nations peoples "in the spirit of reparations for the purpose of reclaiming land, culture and languages" are suggested as the second tier of our tithe. And "paying it forward" to another MC USA conference, in the same way Central District Conference and Indiana-Michigan Conference assisted Allegheny a couple of years ago (to send delegates to national meetings), rounds out the proposal. These suggested priorities were reviewed and affirmed by Allegheny's Leadership Council. Attaching actual numbers to these priorities would look like this:



\$60,000 – MC USA Justice Fund

\$35,000 – Immigration ministry support to San Antonio Mennonite Church, as recommended by Mennonite Mission Network

\$30,000 – to be divided between a direct payment to a first nations people group, still under negotiation (\$20,000), and educational work to dismantle the doctrine of discovery (\$10,000), both aspects recommended by John Stoesz, former MCC staff, who encourages both direct payments to Indigenous peoples (no less than 60% of any gift), and support for educating our own people about Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery (no more than 40%)

\$10,000 – to Gulf States Mennonite Conference (two payments of \$5,000 each over two years).

\$135,000 – TOTAL firstfruits tithe (or one tenth of the proceeds from the sale)

Numerous other factors to be considered around our conference finances include a post-pandemic budget proposal and the furthering of discussion around how to enhance new hospitality and justice ministries with the other portion of the sale proceeds. Look for more background information with this email and in subsequent emails prior to March 6. You will receive a Zoom invitation to the meeting a day or so ahead of time.

#3 – Note on current event planning

– a) The MC USA event planning team has made a decision to hold the delegate portion of MennoCon21 as a **virtual-only meeting**. More details soon to come about other features of this summer's gathering. b) The **annual Spring Study/Retreat** for pastors and leaders at Laurelville has been postponed until Spring 2022. Feedback from the resource person and our pastors determined that we will not be ready to meet in-person by April of this year. c) **Laurelville has made a decision to hold in-person Summer Camps for children and youth.** Registrations will open March 1. Check out the criteria for attending summer camp on Laurelville's website. And stay tuned for more information.

