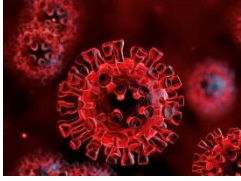


#1 – A measured response to COVID-19

As I write this portion of the Miscellany, the NBA has postponed its season and travel to Europe has been restricted. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has just dropped below 21,500, signaling an official “bear market.” Many meetings are being cancelled across the United States and schools are being closed. How shall we respond?

As people who put their trust in God and follow in the path of Jesus, attempting to respond without fear is at best a challenge. Our conference of congregations stretches from West Virginia to Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. We have not yet been in the epicenter of the virus’ spread, but it appears we will not be spared from its effect.

Mennonite Church USA and Everence have developed informational statements that are quite helpful in a measured response:

Everence: <http://doclib.everence.com/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=31811>

MC USA: <http://mennoniteusa.org/news/mennonite-church-usa-managing-coronavirus/>

MC USA national meetings may be postponed or cancelled. Your congregations may choose to cancel meetings based on your congregation’s profile and context. As we all make decisions for what is best, I share with you what Cindy and Michelle wrote to the Hyattsville congregation as an example of a thoughtful missive - “...please take care of yourself, wash your hands, be kind to your neighbors, call people who may feel isolated. Social distancing is recommended, keeping six feet away from people. And we still need to find ways to care for each other. Please be in touch with one of us if you need a conversation, a prayer, or if you have questions. We pray that we will all find shelter in the love of God in these days of uncertainty.”

May God grant grace to the world and help us be witnesses for peace in this particular time.

#2 – Allegheny delegates meet for Spring Faith & Life Gathering – March 7, 2020

More than 70 persons participated in an historic meeting at Hyattsville Mennonite Church. Two congregations – West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship and Community Mennonite Church (Harrisonburg, VA) – were welcomed into membership. A revised plan of organization was approved, where congregations may send up to seven delegates, of their choosing, to represent their congregation at conference gatherings. A balanced budget, the first in almost a decade, was approved. Several persons visited the International Guest House in the middle of an historic closure as remedies to fire code issues are being addressed.



Photo
By
Ben
Wideman

Allegheny is committed to a centered-set model of faith, life and witness - where Jesus is the center, collaboration is the approach, and place-based ministry is the strategy. We value relationships. We value diversity. We value staying at the table. We are committed to an Anabaptist-Mennonite view of the scriptures.

Mennonite Church USA continues its search for a vision and identity that gives life and vitality to all its participants in the years to come. I so much appreciate how we in Allegheny our finding our way to be the most diverse conference we can imagine under the guidance of God’s Spirit.

#3 – Registration is open for Spring Study

Applications are coming in for the May 4-7 Spring Bible Study for pastors and leaders at Laurelville. “Embodiment and Holism: Reading the Poetry of the Song of Songs” will focus on a reading of this book which leads to creation care, healthy views of body and sexuality, and an agrarian approach to life. Sign up today! See the website for registration materials.



#4 – New Jr. Youth Retreat

March 20-22, a new retreat is coming to Allegheny Conference; it's a Jr. Youth Retreat for ages 9-13. Youth and sponsors are invited to participate for fun, fellowship, service and spiritual growth at Laurelville Mennonite Church. For more information, visit the Allegheny website. Although registration deadlines are past, contact the conference office if you have questions or a late registration - joyc@alleghenymennonite.org



**Cancelled
(will try again next year)**

#5 – Healthy Boundaries Training Scheduled



Every three years, persons actively serving as credentialed ministers of Allegheny Conference are required by Allegheny and Mennonite Church USA to receive “healthy boundaries” training. Michael Danner, Associate Executive Director of Church Vitality and Engagement, will be offering the training on Friday, July 31, prior to the conference annual assembly at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. To register, call the conference office - 814-443-2007. There is a \$25 fee which includes the training booklet.