



weLink
connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference

March 11, 2015



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Administrative Team report

The season of Lent well represents a portion of our experience as we continue to make plans and write job descriptions for reduced staffing beginning July 1. We are beginning to shift some responsibilities and trying to be realistic about what can be done. It is a mixed time of grief and anticipation. And at the same time we are encouraged with stories we hear from Regional Pastors and area councils, about God's spirit at work in congregations.

Missional Leadership Team met Saturday, March 7. Dan attended the entire day; Doug was present for a portion of the afternoon.

Staff have been preparing for delegate meetings, and look forward to spending the day with many of you. Materials were emailed to delegates. Please forward to others who plan to come. The docket can also be accessed on the conference website. Regional Pastors will again lead us in worship, and this year will lead us in communion at the end of the day. An affiliation sheet indicating how each congregation is involved in the life of our congregation of congregations, has been updated with calendar year 2014 data including giving per member. We eagerly anticipate the discussion sparked by this resource, which will be distributed at delegate meetings.

Conference Program Planning Committee continues planning for June 18-20 Annual Sessions in Indianapolis. We look forward to the theme, "Joyfully following Jesus" and text from Isaiah 12. Watch for more information coming in Gospel Evangel and on the website. Bill Miller has agreed to serve as Annual Sessions planner, working with the Conference Program Planning Committee, conference staff and local volunteers to make sure all aspects are tended. Special thanks to Frank Kandel, local coordinator, and other volunteers who are already working diligently to prepare for our time at Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis. The Ministry Credentialing Team is planning a special pastors-only workshop for Thursday afternoon, "Healthy Boundaries for Pastors." We strongly encourage all pastors to come for this important seminar.

In addition to delegate meetings, the coming month includes:

- Doug will travel to northern Michigan and the UP to connect regarding pastoral searches.
- Dan will attend a retreat day with mid-states conference ministers; it is his turn to lead that retreat day.
- Dan will worship with Shalom Mennonite and Mara Christian Church on March 22.
- Gene Hartman, Shannon Dycus and Dan Miller will attend Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) in Newton, Kansas. That will be the last CLC meeting before the Kansas City convention.

- Greg will be out of the office beginning March 12 for surgery on his right leg to correct a knee problem. We hope things go as well this time as they did with the first surgery.

May your month also go well as you travel through Lent, Holy Week and Easter Sunday. God is with us.

MLT meeting summary

The Missional Leadership Team (MLT) met Saturday, March 7 at the Conference Office. We met with five of our members present as finding dates that work for all continues to be a challenge.

Our work for the day focused on three of the five goals identified at our Fall Retreat in August as well as hearing reports from the Missional Credentialing Team (MCT), the Unity and Variance Discernment Group (UVDG), Bethany Christian Schools Board and conference staff.

The first goal was enhancing our communication and responding patterns within conference. Our conversation gave direction and help as we continue to make it a priority to keep the member congregations aware of what happens within our conference of congregations and articulate well our perspectives and our realities. We continue to wrestle with the reality of a conference diverse in belief, thought and action, and yet together in seeking to be the Body of Christ in the world.

The second goal was to work at budget priorities including how the reduced staffing FTE impacts what is done and not done. We focused on naming what we are letting go in June so that the smaller staff will be able to function efficiently and well. Some of what we named is the number of meetings expected from staff, IT work, some communication pieces, amount of supervisory time, and Annual Sessions planning. There is a possibility of asking for volunteers to provide some of this work for our conference of congregations as well as realization we will not do all that we used to do.

And thirdly we gave good time to the Unity and Variance Discernment Group, a goal for our work this year. The MLT is grateful for the work of those who are attending to who we are and what we'll be in relationship to the diverse ways of living out faith in Jesus Christ amidst our member congregations. We pray for the UVDG and how we, as communities together, find a way forward in this time when some decide to leave holding the Confession of Faith strongly, some decide to experiment with how we hold the MCUSA Confession of Faith and many observe, pray and even lament from the 'center'. We affirmed the meeting at East Goshen Mennonite Church on February 8 – *Faithfulness Under the Cross: Unity, Division and the Church*. We heard a report of the survey taken by this group to be shared at the Delegate Meetings in March. We also heard a report on their plans for future work.

In a report from the MCT we became aware again how the diversity in our conference about same-sex relationships makes decision-making more complicated. We continue to pray for the Team and the difficult decisions they are commissioned to make.

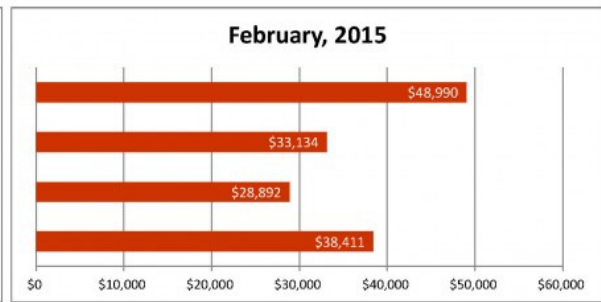
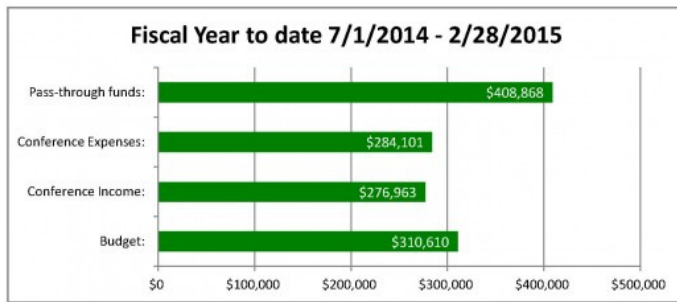
It is an honor to serve the church even when times are in change mode and even chaotic to some. It is, in fact, the Body of Christ in the world. May we grow in our understanding of how the crucified and risen body of Jesus is re-membered as the church, a light in the world.

Financial report

Great news! Individual and congregational contributions to the work of conference were significantly above budgeted expectations for the month of February. As it tends to be one of our slower financial months, conference had expected a loss of around \$15,000 for February. At the end of the month, however, it was a delightful surprise to find that increased giving and lowered expenses resulted in a loss of only \$4,242.

Using 5 year trends with the monthly and fiscal year to date numbers, we currently project an end of fiscal year loss of less than \$7,000. This loss is an improvement over the end of the last couple of fiscal years when conference ended with losses of approximately \$10,500 and \$15,000.

Thank you for supporting the work of conference with your prayers, time, participation, and financial support.



Conference office closed during spring break

The conference office will be closed for spring break Monday, April 6 through Friday, April 10. In case of emergency, please contact Dan Miller, conference pastor, at 574-238-1883.

Healthy Boundaries Seminar for Pastors



Dr. Melissa Hofstetter will present a seminar on maintaining pastoral boundaries at a special workshop Thursday, June 18, 12:30 – 5:30 as part of Annual Sessions. Lunch will be provided for pre-registrants at 11:30.

Dr. Hofstetter will cover a range of topics, including embodiment of clergy self-care, embodiment of healthy sexual ethics, pastoral care & counseling, mental health & the church, power dynamics/differentials, dual/multiple relationships in ministry contexts, sexual misconduct, clergy reporting suspected abuse/neglect of children, and child safety issues.

Special note: This workshop is designed specifically for credentialed church leaders, and may become required for pastors credentialed by conference. **Attendance is limited to pastors only.** The cost of this workshop is being underwritten this year by a special grant from the Leadership Training Fund.

About the presenter: Melissa Hofstetter, PhD, MDiv has served as a district elder in the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference and is a licensed psychologist in Los Angeles, California (#PSY25696), where she has a private practice, lectures at Azusa Pacific University. She has enjoyed providing workshops to clergy across the country on pastoral ethics and boundary maintenance since 2010.

2015 Annual Sessions information

[Click here to view an Annual Sessions summary information sheet](#), including theme, scripture, location, speakers, a draft schedule, registration information, and lodging options.

Annual Sessions lodging options now online

Thanks to a very dedicated local planning group, a document listing lodging options for 2015 Annual Sessions in Indianapolis is now available online. The document includes clickable links and other contact information, making it very easy for delegates to make reservations.

Please note that, while there is an option to stay in local homes, there are very limited spaces available, and they are on a first come, first served basis.

[Click here to view or download the PDF file.](#)

Amigo Centre

Amigo Scrapbooking, Crafters, and Quilting Retreat... April 10-12, is our next retreat. For this event you may come as early as Thursday if you wish! Amigo Centre invites you to a weekend of productivity along with the opportunity to rest, restore and refresh your body and soul. Whether you scrapbook, quilt, or have another craft that you love, we invite you to come and we will provide the space, lodging, great food and just the right amount of focused input to allow you time for your projects as well as fun and fellowship. Information as well as online registration is available at www.amigocentre.org. Call if you have questions 269.651.2811

Bethany Christian Schools

March 17 Pastors Day at Bethany. Bethany invites pastors to shadow one of their youth who attends Bethany. This provides pastors an opportunity to relate to their youth in their own setting and learn more about Bethany. Register and learn more at http://www.bethanycs.net/Pastors_Day.

March 23 Visit Day at Bethany for prospective students and their parents considering Bethany. Register and learn more at <http://www.bethanycs.net/admissions/visit>.

Mennonite Women Spring Gathering May 2

IN-MI Mennonite Women will hold their annual Spring Gathering at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church on Saturday, May 2nd, 2015. Registration begins at 8:30 AM. Coffee, juice and rolls will be served, as well as a luncheon. The title of the program is "Singing As We Go: the Songs, Stories, and Faith of the Stoltzfus Sisters." For more information, please contact Shirley Bustos, President, at 219-462-0526 or SABustos@comcast.net. Babysitting and vegetarian food will be available upon request.

2015 Mennonite Youth Choir Festival



On March 1, 2015 one hundred and thirty young people from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania gathered to share the music they prepared during the 24th annual Mennonite Youth Choir Festival held at Goshen College. They sang under the direction of Janeal Crabb Krehbiel from Lawrence Kansas who challenged each singer to improve their skills and create a choir with a beautiful tone.

The concert included various choral selections including *Softly and Tenderly* and *Gott ist die Liebe* from Hymnal a Worship Book. The theme for this year was *There Has to Be A Song*, which the combined choir sang as the closing number. This theme encouraged our young people to see music as a way to express their deepest emotions.

This festival is open to all 3rd – 9th graders who enjoy singing. Registrations begin for the next year's festival in September 2015. The 25th annual festival to be held on March 5 & 6, 2016. This is a 2 month commitment for each participant to learn the music and attend the festival weekend. There are a number of ways to learn the music (at home with a CD, or joining Goshen area rehearsals during Jan & Feb.) If you have questions you are invited to visit our website at <http://mennoniteyouthchoir.com>.

Job listings

Position open for Administrative Assistant for **Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship**, an association of healthcare professionals based in Goshen, Indiana. Flexible .5 FTE. Requirements include familiarity with Microsoft Office and QuickBooks plus the ability to work via Internet, learn web applications, and travel several times a year. Send resume with references to Paul Leichty, director@mennohealth.org. Resumes accepted until position is filled.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks a full time editor and feature writer who will craft primary communication tools for constituent engagement. The ideal candidate will hold a deep passion for God's mission globally, excel at collaboration and team work environments, and possess a high level of skill in communication across diverse media platforms. A bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations, or communications is preferred. Must be committed to denominational and agency goals of intercultural diversity initiatives. Mission Network seeks to employ a diverse staff and welcomes all inquiries. This position can be based at our Elkhart, Indiana, Newton, Kansas or a remote location. For a detailed position description view our website at www.MennoniteMission.net or contact Linda Krueger, HR Coordinator at StaffRecruitment@MennoniteMission.net.

Seeking Marketing and Communication Director Mennonite Mission Network is also seeking a full time Marketing and Communication Director who is responsible to lead in developing vision and strategies for constituent engagement. The ideal candidate will hold a deep passion for God's mission globally, excel at collaboration and team leadership, and possess a high level of skill in communication across diverse media platforms. A bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations, or communications is preferred. Must be committed to denominational and agency goals of intercultural diversity initiatives. Mission Network seeks to employ a diverse staff and welcomes all inquiries. This position will be based in Elkhart, Indiana. For a detailed position description view our website at www.MennoniteMission.net or contact Linda Krueger, HR Coordinator at StaffRecruitment@MennoniteMission.net.

weLink connects IN-MI Conference congregations to each other, to the conference organizations Amigo Centre, Bethany Christian Schools and to the wider church. It is published on the second Wednesday of each month. *weLink* issues are archived on the conference website at im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/.

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