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A word from MLT

Our world's focus has narrowed in the past month to the common threat we are all experiencing from a viral pandemic. A delegation from the Tanzanian Mennonite church, making a fraternal visit from Shirati diocese to Indiana-Michigan Conference, arrived in the US in early March just as we were beginning to cancel activities and stay home. Bishop R. C. Kateti and Simon Songe shortened their visit because of the virus.

I was glad to have the opportunity to spend parts of two days in conversation with them. The meetings were organized by Dan, and included other members of the MLT and the Tanzania exploration group and some members of the Tanzania Mennonite Church who live locally. We had a chance to introduce our conference and the way we are organized, and to hear from them about theirs. I found especially fascinating their description of tensions they are experiencing within their fellowship – some around marriage expectations, and some around worship style. Sounds familiar! It was inspiring to hear about their active youth fellowship that includes people from age 12 to age 40, their work to be more transparent in how leaders exercise power, and their ambitious goal to increase their total membership dramatically in the next 10 years.

We looked at expectations from each side about what it would mean to commit to a partnership between IMMC and Shirati Diocese. I look forward to the continued discernment of the MLT and the delegates on this question. I'm grateful that Bishop and Songe were able to return home safely and without delay. I give thanks for their ongoing prayers for us, and pray for them God's comfort and blessing during this vulnerable time.

Brenda Hostetler Meyer
Moderator-elect, MLT member

What a difference a month makes!

In this time of adaptation and physical distancing, IMMC congregations remain focused on worship, caring for one another, and connecting with the world around us. God continues to be with us in circumstances different than we imagined a month ago. As we move through challenging times over the next while, we will continue to open ourselves to God's transforming Spirit in prayer and other spiritual practices. We will make ourselves available as agents of grace love and peace to the world God loves. For we are followers of Jesus.

As we find our way through this time, we invite you to:

- * check the conference website for helpful resources during this time.
- * pray for those who are sick and those who are well.
- * if you do not need the COVID stimulus check, consider passing the money to conference, congregation or other service agency to help those who are vulnerable in this time.

Zoom Delegate Meetings

In light of cancelling the final two Regional Meetings, we are asking all delegates to gather over Zoom to explore how we can best support one another as a community of congregations given COVID-19 realities and to discuss the items addressed in the Regional Meetings **Docket** (Please review). Delegates have three opportunities to attend: **Thursday, April 9th, 10am, Monday, April 13th, 7pm, Wednesday, April 15, 5pm.**

Please RSVP by clicking a link below:

[Zoom Meeting 1: April 9th, 10am](#)

[Zoom Meeting 2: April 13th, 7pm](#)

[Zoom Meeting 3: April 15th, 5pm](#)

If you are not able to participate, we would appreciate it if you would email the office at imoffice@im.mennonite.net or 574-534-4006.

Celebrating

- * the resourceful and creative leadership in congregations, that have made quick adjustments as the coronavirus spread.
- * that many congregations are finding ways to worship and be church in a time of

distancing.

* for the health and safety of visitors from Tanzania in March.

Connecting

* the Constituency Leaders Council that Brenda and Dan were going to attend on March 26-28 was initially delayed and then cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for October 2020.

* Dan will preach at East Goshen Mennonite on April 19, as part of the congregation's Conference Sunday celebration.

* A number of pastors across IMMC are connecting on Zoom on Tuesday nights at 7pm and on Thursdays at 10am to share and resource one another. This week will include the topic of accessing CARES money.

Credentialing and Leadership Development

*Credentialing and search processes continue during this time of coronavirus, thanks to phone calls, email, and Zoom meetings. Congregational coaches, search guides, and conference staff are available for questions and conversations.

*Volunteer Search Guides are walking with 5 congregations who are searching for new pastors.

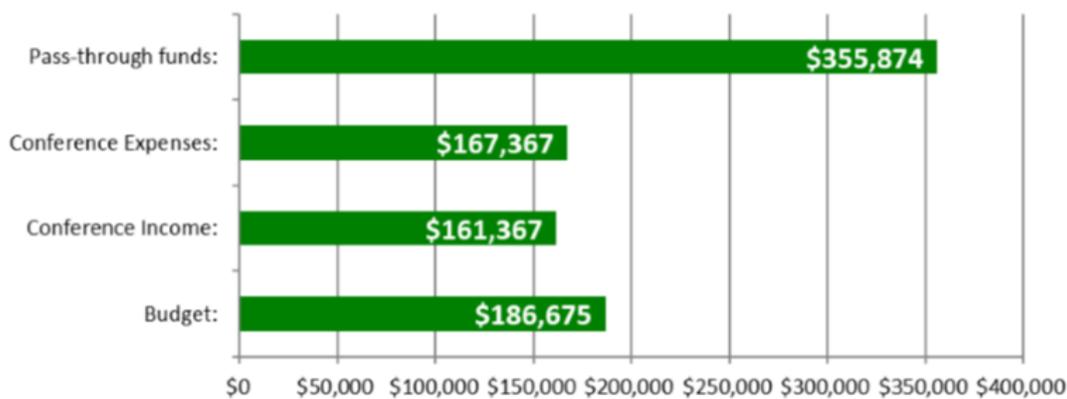
*In March, Sharon had contact with 14 potential pastoral applicants and with 9 congregations in various stages of leadership transition.

Financial Report

March 2020



Fiscal Year to date 7/1/2019 - 3/30/2020



The income for the month was \$5,729 below expectations but only \$233 below expenses. For the year to date it was \$25,308 below expectations but only \$6,413 below expenses. -Jim Norton, *conference bookkeeper*

News from Bethany Christian Schools

Persons interested in an open position should contact send a resume and letter of interest to head of school Tim Lehman at tclehman@bethanycs.net or by phone at 574 534-2567. Currently seeking an Advancement Assistant and a Spanish Teacher. More information at bethanycs.net/employment-opportunities.

Amigo Updates

Spring has arrived at Amigo Centre. The birds are out in full force. Geese, swans, Sandhill cranes and even a loon have taken up residence on Perrin Lake. This spring is going to feel different at camp and we invite your prayers for the coming

months. Amigo Centre has seen a significant drop in revenue for the next four months.

Due to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order our offices are closed. Staff are working from home. Our phone is forwarded to various staff persons throughout the week so you will be able to get in contact with someone if needed. It might take a little to get back to you. Please be patient.

We are hoping and praying that summer camp will happen. We encourage you to sign up if possible. We are waiving the deposit amount because of the uncertainty ahead of us. It will help us with planning for staff and what is needed headed into the summer. We plan to make a decision by May 8 about summer camp.

We are planning to open Amigo Park on May 15th. We are still planning on that unless the Governor of Michigan extends her Executive Order limiting non-essential business operations. Please continue to make reservations. We'll all need a week of camping after being stuck in our homes for so long.

We have been wrestling with how we can do camp while not being at camp. This past weekend we held a virtual retreat by posting a sequence of videos from around camp on Facebook. We have time lapses, wildlife videos and even a campfire for you to enjoy. We're in this together so if you have ideas please pass them on.

How you can help:

- Tell a friend about Amigo Centre.
- Follow us on social media. (we weren't super active before and we're slowly learning). We're posting videos, activity ideas and updates about Amigo Centre.
- Sign up for our email newsletters and forward to others.
- Pray for us.
- Stay home. Do your part to stop the spread and we'll all be able to sit around a campfire soon.
- Give financially. It is not lost on us that many are facing financial uncertainty right now. Right now contributions are what are allowing us to continue to pay our bills and staff. You can mail donations to 26455 Banker St Sturgis MI 49091 or give on our website at [org/donate](#)

-Matt Ropp, Executive Director at Amigo Centre

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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