



**June 5, 2020**



## Contents

### A word from MLT...

When the MLT meets for our day-long meetings, we begin the day praying for the congregations of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC). Our last meeting occurred the day before Pentecost Sunday. The Covid-19 death toll recently surpassed the 100,000 mark. Protests rose up regarding the death of George Floyd and racial injustice plaguing our country. The evening before our meeting I saw many disturbing images. My heart was heavy that Saturday morning. I did not much feel like leading an MLT meeting.

Naomi Yoder began our “Zoom day” in prayer. At the end of that prayer, I was left speechless. My heart was comforted. I did not want to rush onto the next agenda item. So I sat there. Resting. Soaking in the loving embrace of God.

Naomi incorporated a Jan Richardson prayer titled “This Grace That Scorches Us: A Blessing for Pentecost Day” (from *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*), along with one of Richardson’s images titled “Pentecost Fire.” This became for me a prayer of hope and expectation as we delegates will soon gather for our Annual Sessions. After the MLT members took turns naming every congregation in our conference, our prayer continued:

*Here's one thing  
you must understand  
about this blessing:  
it is not  
for you alone.*

*It is stubborn  
about this.  
Do not even try  
to lay hold of it  
if you are by yourself,  
thinking you can carry it  
on your own.*

*To bear this blessing,  
you must first take yourself  
to a place where everyone  
does not look like you*

*or think like you,  
a place where they do not  
believe precisely as you believe,  
where their thoughts  
and ideas and gestures  
are not exact echoes  
of your own.*

*Bring your sorrow.  
Bring your grief.  
Bring your fear.  
Bring your weariness,  
your pain,  
your disgust at how broken  
the world is,  
how fractured,  
how fragmented  
by its fighting,  
its wars,  
its hungers,  
its penchant for power,  
its ceaseless repetition  
of the history it refuses  
to rise above.*

*I will not tell you  
this blessing will fix all that.*

*But in the place  
where you have gathered,  
wait.  
Watch.  
Listen.*

*Lay aside your inability  
to be surprised,  
your resistance to what you  
do not understand.  
See then whether this blessing  
turns to flame on your tongue,  
sets you to speaking  
what you cannot fathom  
or opens your ear  
to a language  
beyond your imagining  
that comes as a knowing  
in your bones,  
a clarity  
in your heart  
that tells you  
this is the reason*

*we were made:  
for this ache  
that finally opens us,  
for this struggle,  
this grace  
that scorches us  
toward one another  
and into  
the blazing day.*

May it be so. Amen. I look forward to seeing you in a few weeks!

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## Annual Sessions 2020



We invite **EVERYONE** to join us for this year's Annual Sessions (June 19th and 20th)! We will be gathering over Zoom beginning with worship on June 19th at 1:30pm. This year's theme "Built Together" will take you deep into Paul's word in Ephesians 2:1-11.

If you haven't registered, it's not too late! More information on Annual Sessions 2020, seminars and on how to register is available here:

<https://im.mennonite.net/2020-annual-sessions/>.

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## IMMC Updates

### Missional Leadership Team Change

As part of stepping aside from leadership roles at Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship, Bess has withdrawn early from her term on Missional Leadership Team (MLT), as she and Will take time to open to what is next. Bess and Will were founding leaders for the congregation and stepped down last fall. MLT will miss Bess's presence and contributions. Gifts Development Team is in contact with MLT about this recently opened position.

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The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and consequent demonstrations, has resonated with many in IMMC over the last weeks. This is a recent death among many African American deaths that have unfairly taken people from their families and friends. As we work to name our own systemic racism, we lament the inequities built into the culture in which we live. Let us not miss the opportunity to learn and grow, living into God's righteous justice in our communities.

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## Celebrating

- \* looking forward to substantive conversation and worship at Annual Sessions, June 19-20.
  - \* the birth of the church at Pentecost.
  - \* the work done by conference leadership teams this year. (See leadership teams reports in the report book!)
  - \* Interest by Piedra Viva (Elkhart) in being part of IMMC.
  - \* Dan enjoyed a week of vacation, May 18-22.
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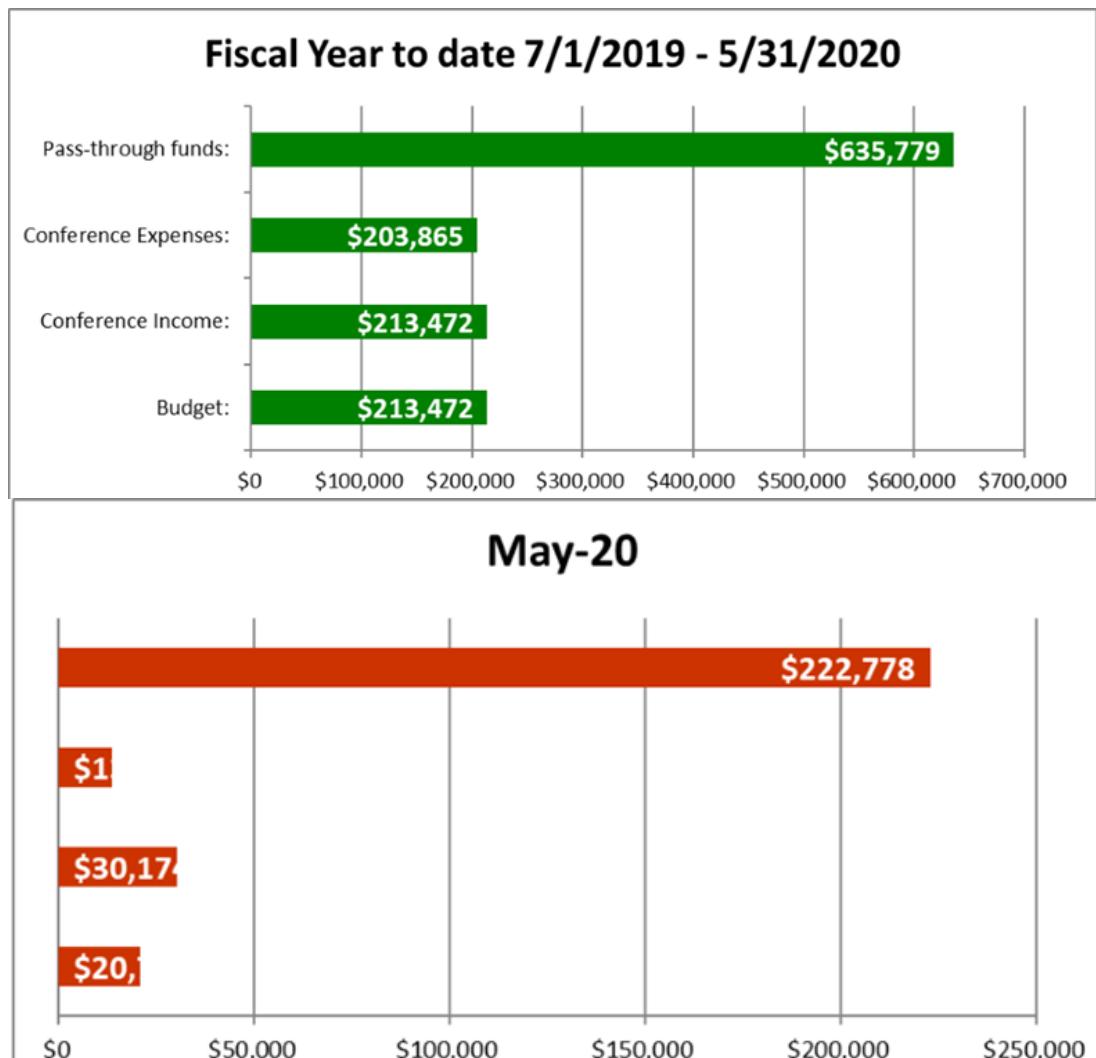
## Connecting

- \* Dan met with the Journey board May 14. IMMC has one new person who has been admitted to Journey for the fall.
  - \* Sharon and/or Dan are taking part in weekly check-in Zoom calls with conference ministers.
  - \* Mennonite Church USA and the church agencies have been offering regular resource webinars to pastors and congregations.
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## Credentialing and Leadership Development

- \* Naun Cerrato will be installed and licensed at Piedra Viva Mennonite Church, Elkhart, on June 14.
  - \* Congregational search committees, along with their search guides, have been active with interviewing pastoral applicants, mostly by zoom. A couple of them have moved to “candidate-of-choice” stages and are discerning how to plan for candidating weekends with safe social distancing.
  - \* Sharon had contact with 16 potential applicants in May. We were grateful to receive several new MLIs (pastoral applications) in the past month.
  - \* In May Sharon had multiple contacts with search guides and/or leadership teams of 6 congregations in various stages of leadership transition.
  - \* We invite your ongoing prayers for God’s light and wisdom to guide leadership teams and search committees in their important discernment work.
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## IMMC Financial Update



Less than half of our income for the month was our regular income which was below expectation. The majority of our income was from the PPP program. While our income of \$30,174 was \$9,432 above budget for the year the total of \$213,472 was \$14,686 below expectation. Our expenses for the month were \$7,054 below budget and for the year \$9,607 below income.- *Jim Norton, IMMC Bookkeeper*

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## Amigo Centre Updates

- **Amigo Park update.** Amigo Park will be opening with limitations beginning next weekend, June 13. The bathhouse and playground area will not be available. All units must be self-contained at this time. For questions or to make reservations call 269-651-2734.
- **Camp in a Box.** Due to the cancellation of 2020 Summer Camp and Day Camp, Amigo is offering a “Camp in a Box” for anyone who would like to reserve a box sent (or picked up) for potential campers. The box contains a 2020 Summer Camp T-shirt, flashlight, Amigo Journal, along with a Devotional Guide, and craft and activities as well as meal suggestions for a week of “at home” camp. To learn more or sign up, visit our web site at [amigocentre.org](http://amigocentre.org). You may donate to help cover costs related to this as well.  
*Thank you for your support!*
- **Family Camp.** Amigo is able to open in a very limited capacity beginning early July. Guest groups with current reservations that fall within our guidelines will be able to come under our reopening guidelines and expectations.
- We are working on opportunities for families to come to Amigo, in certain reserved spaces, in lieu of limited travel and vacation options this year due to Covid-19. Check our web site for additional details or call 269-651-2811 for additional information and to check on availability.
- **Know Jesus** update: Every two years Amigo and Goshen College have been offering a Jr High group event on the campus of Goshen College in late July, early August. Due to many changes over the last number of years, Goshen College and Amigo have determined that we will no longer offer this event as it has been done over the last 20 years. Amigo will be looking at options for creating a space at Amigo in the future and welcomes input and feedback from current Jr high leaders and groups on what you would like to see going forward. Send your comments to [Colton@amigocentre.org](mailto:Colton@amigocentre.org) or [Mandy@amigocentre.org](mailto:Mandy@amigocentre.org)
- **Women and Girls’ Retreat – SAVE THE DATE:** The Women and Girls’ Retreat, traditionally held in the fall, has been moved to March 19-21, 2021. Due to the potential restrictions and hesitation around Covid-19, we felt this would put the retreat in a better position to be successful. More details will be coming in the next few months.

- **Amigo Bike Michiana** is scheduled for September 11-13, 2020. For more information on project and tentative schedule, visit [amigocentre.org](http://amigocentre.org).
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## Bethany Christian Schools

This group of seniors from the Bethany Christian Concert Choir, directed by Brody Thomas, shared this piece of music as part of the virtual commencement program last weekend. We hope you enjoy their beautiful music as we continue to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2020.

Video edited by Director Brody Thomas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNzuXZ7Qox8&feature=youtu.be>

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**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/](http://im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/).

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