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A word from MLT

Thanks to all of you who took time to complete the demographics survey and follow-up interview with a member of the Missional Leadership Team. The MLT is reading and re-reading, listening and reflecting. There is more here than we can process quickly. We hope to create some graphs from this data that will help give us a clearer picture of who we are. Here's some of what I notice:

- Our congregations and conference reflect our neighborhoods and also include people from all over the world! Many of you affirmed the conference priority on intercultural competence, noting the cultural diversity in our conference and the racial tensions in our country.
- About 60% of our congregations have fewer than 50 people participating regularly.
- Congregations are grateful for help with pastoral searches, conflict resolution, and ways that Dan and others have reached out to connect and keep relationships strong. Pastors appreciate the area councils and are glad to belong to a supportive network.
- These are some barriers to conference participation: travel distance, bi-vocational pastors, aging of conference supporters, busy lives, suspicion over differences in theological understandings, worship style and social connections oriented toward European Mennonites.
- There are a few congregations in our conference that have years of experience of being racially intercultural in their make-up and leadership. Other congregations are working to educate themselves about white privilege and racism.
- Even congregations without much racial diversity have interesting diversity in age, education levels, and (one we forgot to ask about) denominational and religious backgrounds. Some have been creative and intentional about welcoming this diversity.

We as an MLT are grateful for this glimpse of who we are and what the Spirit is doing among us. We are excited about ways that congregations may be resources and support for each other in the the process of intercultural learning, and hope we can help facilitate that. Along with you we will keep looking and listening for the Spirit's nudges as we plan next steps.

IMMC Updates

Pastor Gathering cancelled for this year.

The groups planning November's Pastor Gathering believe it is not wise to ask pastors to come from across IMMC to Amigo Centre this year. There is also awareness of Zoom fatigue, and pastors are encouraged to attend those. Therefore, the 2020 Pastor Gathering is cancelled.

Note from Leadership Enhancement Team

"With the cancelling of this year's retreat, we want to give you a special encouragement to find space for self-care during these unusual, and often stress-filled times. Plan a day of retreat where you can social distance and enjoy God's creation in a way that you find meaningful. Amigo offers this type of opportunity, you can check with them for availability. If it's difficult to get away for an entire day, plan a shorter event, and even consider planning your self-care time/day over the original retreat days when we would have gathered. We anticipate and look forward to being with you at next year's retreat!"

MLT Announcement Regarding Dan Miller

An announcement was sent out yesterday that "Dan Miller, our Indiana-Michigan Mennonite (IMMC) conference pastor, recently informed the Missional Leadership Team (MLT) that he will end his employment with our conference when his current term concludes in June 2021. We are grateful for the many years Dan has faithfully served." – Bob Yoder, MLT

You can read more about this in the official MLT news release found [HERE](#). **note that a change has been to the news release. Dan began his work in 2009, not 2008.*

Celebrating

* virtual and in-person settings used by congregations to worship and to be the church in mission.

* the upcoming Journey Weekend Learning Event. Merv Reist of Kern Road is entering his final session of Journey. Congratulations to Merv, and to his mentor, Harold Yoder. Who in your congregation might benefit from Journey?

* the fall All-Teams Retreat, September 18-19. This year's event is virtual because of the pandemic. We are grateful for those who serving on conference leadership teams. MLT will lead this gathering of the teams.

* the fall webinar series with Nekiesha Alexis beginning Tuesday, September 15. Subsequent webinars will be on the second Tuesday of each month through December. A brief video invitation is available [HERE](#). Registration is required, and there is prework that will take 30-60 minutes. Pre-work information is sent 7-10 days ahead. [You can register here](#). Why not invite several people from your congregation to join you? The deadline to register is Monday, September 14th.

* Missional Leadership Team's (MLT) annual planning retreat on August 28-29. The group met at Amigo Centre to plan for the coming conference year.

Connecting

* Dan Miller is beginning a new round of conversations with pastors for 2020-2021. It went so well last year. He will be meeting with chaplains as well this year.

Credentialing and Leadership Development

* Two new pastors were recently called to serve in area congregations. Sharon Yoder will lead their credential and installation services in the coming weeks:

– Carmen Horst will be licensed toward ordination to serve as one of the pastors at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church via zoom on September 13.

– Nathan Graber-McCrae will be licensed toward ordination to serve as lead pastor at North Goshen Mennonite Church on September 20.

* Four active pastoral searches continue, with one search team currently interviewing applicants with the assistance of a gifted search guide. A couple of congregations are waiting for applicants. Sharon continues conversations with a variety of potential pastoral applicants and we invite you to join in praying for God to nudge the persons God is calling to serve in IMMC congregations.

Updates from Amigo

- Summer is winding down but Amigo Centre is still taking **reservations for families**. If you're looking for a quiet relaxing weekend, come stay at the Retreat Center or West Shore Lodge. Both buildings have small designated suites to limit contact with people outside of your group. Meals, staff led activities or pontoon rides are available. Groups need to be 10 or fewer. Call 269-651-2811 or email us at info@amigocentre.org
- If you like to travel with your own lodging come spend a weekend (or a whole week) at **Amigo Park**. The fish are biting and the beach is open. We

are currently only open for campers with a self-contained bathroom in their camper. Give us a call at 269-651-2734

- **Homeschooling** this year? Amigo Centre's homeschool program will be running in a modified approach. Classes are limited to 10 students. All classes will be outside or in a pavilion setting. Come explore God's Creation in lessons designed for different age groups and different topics. Seven sessions throughout the year. **A few spaces are still available.** More information can be found at amigocentre.org/homeschool-program.html
- Amigo Centre has had to change the way we operate. We're looking for **volunteers** to help as we plan and host guests this fall and into the winter. We are in need of people to help deep clean, paint, plant, fix, repair, mow and weed. We have three cottages that we are trying to update for guest retreats and could use help in all aspects of the project. Drywall, painting, roofing, basic plumbing, siding. If you're interested email matt@amigocentre.org.
- Mark your calendars for next summer. Registration is open for **summer camp**. If you're 18 or older we have started our [summer staff recruiting](#). Let us know if you're interested in working as a counselor or providing leadership to our programming. Contact colton@amigocentre.org for more information.

Amigo Programming Updates

Registration link: <https://www.ultracamp.com/clientlogin.aspx?idCamp=589&campCode=amc>

- **Scrapbooking, Crafting and Sewing Retreats** – we are working on separating the scrapbookers from the quilters – in order to accommodate the groups that would like to come to Amigo to retreat. If you are interested in setting up a retreat for your group of friends, please contact Amigo and let us know. We will be sending additional information out soon in relation to new date options available.
- **Women and Girls' Retreat –March 19-21, 2021.**
 - Our theme is "Your Story Matters!"
 - Our speaker, **Connie Gochenaur** is a storyteller and a blogger. The mother of four grown daughters and Grandma to seven beautiful grandchildren, she's a transplanted city girl, now living the "Green Acres" life. Her devotional writing has been featured in *The Upper Room* and *Prodigal*. Her passions, outside of writing, are for the local *Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack*, and an art ministry she began for senior citizens. She is passionate about the study of God's Word, and fascinated by how relevant it is to daily living.
 - **Join us** for an enriching weekend as we explore God's Story, our own, and discover how the two fit together. Through worship and workshops, we will uncover spiritual truths as we take ownership of our stories – for God's glory. From the simplest memory to the most complex tale, your story is valuable. It is worthy of attention – and redemption. YOUR STORY MATTERS!
 - Registration is now open and additional details may be found on Amigo's web site: <https://www.amigocentre.org/women-and-girls-retreat.html>
- **SAVE THE DATE: Amigo Bike Michiana** scheduled for October 8-10, 2021.

- Our speaker will be Dr. Sibonokuhle Ncube, founding Executive Director/National Coordinator of the Brethren in Christ Compassionate and Development Services in Zimbabwe, currently studying at AMBS. In fall of 2018, Dr. Ncube was part of a Global South Voice Speaking Tour of the Great Lakes region, co-sponsored by MCC and the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions.
- **The project: Climate Mitigation in Zimbabwe.** Partnering with the Brethren in Christ Church Compassionate and Development Services (CDS) to work with disadvantaged communities in the Gwanda North wards as part of an Anabaptist Christian witness to promote climate change resilience through sustainable crop and livestock production. This gender sensitive project promotes Conservation Agriculture principles for both female and male farmer households, as well as assistance in repairing and construction of dams and bore holes, raising the living standards, widening food choices and increasing project participants' incomes.
- Here's a story about it: <https://mcc.org/stories/addressing-conflict-caused-limited-resources>
- Visit our web site for registration and additional information: amigocentre.org

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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