



**December 9, 2020**



## Contents

### A word from MLT

Dan Miller, our conference pastor, announced to the Missional Leadership Team (MLT), and then subsequently to the IMMC delegates this past September, of his intention to conclude his role in Summer 2021. Since then, the MLT has reviewed the job description and invited the wisdom of delegates and other leaders via a survey and conversations as we consider our future. We have also sought to assemble a search committee to begin its work in January 2021. Our plan is to offer a more detailed update on the transition next week. But for now, I would like to share personally how I have experienced this process so far.

Some of you know that I consider myself a “Spirit man” and have joked at times that if I had to pick a favorite aspect of the Triune God that it would be the Holy Spirit. Though the conference pastor search process is far from over, I have been truly amazed at the Holy Spirit’s leading. I am grateful for excellent MLT leaders who desire to be attentive to that leading as we consider the future of IMMC and the make-up of this position. The Spirit has not disappointed me as we have listened to leaders and delegates within our conference, and each other.

It is not always easy to “know” how or when the Spirit shows up, but I will offer one example. There have been times when an MLT member suggested a good idea. But as the team grappled with complex realities surrounding that good idea, often an even better idea emerged that more fully incorporated or addressed those complexities!

There is more that I could share, but for now, this brief glimpse must do. The MLT has one more meeting later this week, and then we expect to share an update with you next week. Please stay tuned. —Bob Yoder, IMMC Moderator

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### IMMC Updates

Is your congregation looking for a next step in undoing racism?

IMMC offers financial support for congregations using Widerstand’s online Anti-racism training.

For congregations who purchase one-year access to Widerstand Consulting’s

online Anti-Racism curriculum, IMMC offers a two-stage reimbursement. A check for \$100 will be sent when a congregation informs the office they have purchased access. A check for \$150 will be sent when the congregation's leadership team sends the plan developed through the curriculum. Cost for the curriculum varies according to congregational size. The cost for a year's access to the online curriculum for a congregation of 100 or less is \$250. See [info sheet](#) for details.

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## Celebrating

- \* Advent and the time of anticipation ahead of Christmas. That Jesus came as a baby into a world in need of salvation. May your congregation experience moments of awe and wonder on this journey to Bethlehem.
  - \* the life and ministry of Terry Zehr, recently serving as Pastor of Senior Ministries at Waterford Mennonite. He had previously served as pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite in Elkhart. Terry died November 25, having walked with cancer for 14 years. An obituary is available [here](#).
  - \* that Velma Swartz could return to her former role, now serving as interim Pastor of Senior Ministries at Waterford Mennonite.
  - \* the *Voices Together* Dedication Launch on Zoom, December 13, 5-7 pm. [Click for more information](#).
  - \* a subgroup of Stewardship Team that spent a Friday afternoon looking over the finances to answer questions about best practices in bookkeeping and how to record uncommon entries.
  - \* the four-session webinar series with Nekiesha Alexis, *Built Together: A Foundation Series*. The last session featured storytelling about the work of intercultural competence and anti-racism in two congregations. Many thanks to Nekeisha!
  - \* the work of Gifts Development Team (GDT). Gifts Development Team catalyzes a “culture of call” in conference and member congregations. With help from delegates and others, GDT identifies gifted individuals to serve on IMMC leadership teams. GDT has been busy the last several years trying to help IMMC leadership teams to look like IMMC constituency.
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## Connecting

- \* The annual December gathering of MC Canada and MC USA area church/conference ministers was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. There was a resourcing event with Brad Jersak on “A Christlike Approach to Leading Polarized People.” Dan Miller joined that event.

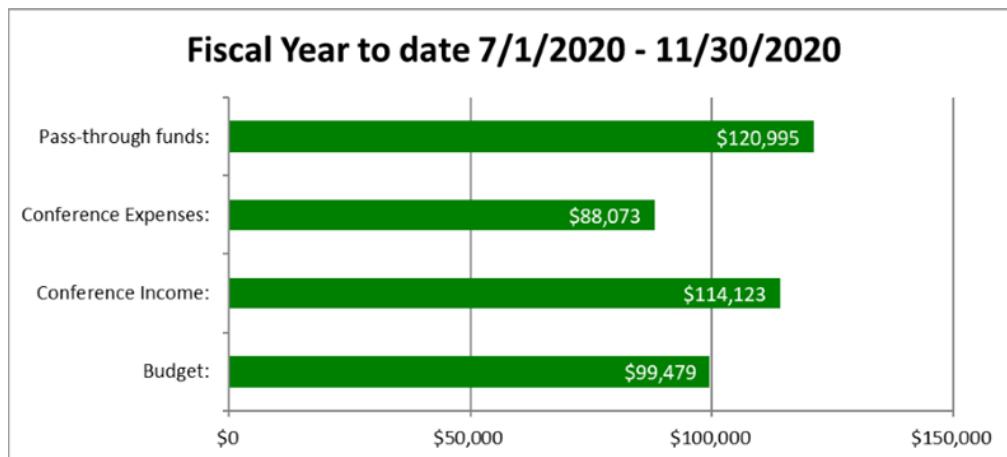
\* Anabaptist Youth Leaders meet on the third Thursday of each month. They are currently meeting on Zoom. For information about joining this creative group of leaders to reflect on ministry with youth and young adults, contact Merle Hostetler at [merle@eastgoshenmc.org](mailto:merle@eastgoshenmc.org).

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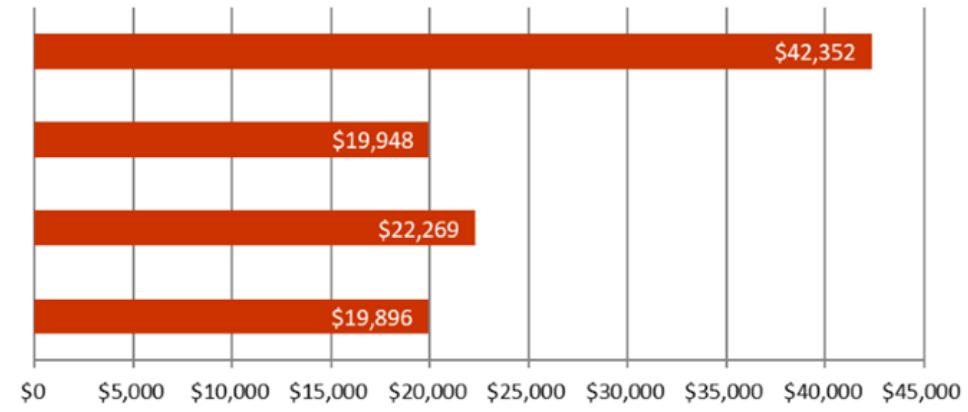
## Credentialing and Leadership Development

- \* Search guides met with Sharon Yoder via zoom on November 16 for their annual refresher meeting. We were encouraged to hear stories of God's faithfulness in pastoral search processes.
  - \* Belmont Mennonite search committee, together with their leadership team, recently introduced their pastoral candidate through a variety of creative virtual settings and a drive-by meet-and-greet.
  - \* Several search committees continue the prayerful process of reviewing MLIs and discerning how to move forward with pastoral applicants. We invite you to continue holding them in prayer, for God's Wisdom to guide them.
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## Financial Updates



## Nov-20



For the month of November our income was \$2,373 above expectations and \$2,321 above expenses. Year to date we are \$14,644 above budget due to income from the Payroll Protection Program of over \$17,000. —*Jim Norton, IMMC bookkeeper*

## Updates from Amigo

- **RETREAT TO AMIGO:** If you are looking for a way to get out of the house and have a safe place to stay, consider coming to Amigo! By using the Retreat Center and West Shore Lodge we have created **six small designated suites** to limit contact with people outside of your group. Meals and staff led activities available, and limited access to the Activity Center. When's the last time you just sat and listened to the birds, Sandhill cranes and geese communicating around a lake... or watched the chipmunks and squirrels play... it's very entertaining! Bring your family and we will provide the space for you to relax and play. Call 269-651-2811 or email us at [info@amigocentre.org](mailto:info@amigocentre.org)
- 2020 has been a year full of challenges....bring the year to a close with a **memory making evening December 28-31 at Amigo Centre:**
  - come reflect with your family around a campfire
  - share with one another about the hard spaces you have navigated
  - toss sticks in the fire to represent the difficult things to let go of as 2020 draws to an end
  - reflect with each other on the blessings you've experienced in 2020
  - celebrate with some hot chocolate and freshly baked cookies from Amigo.
  - as the moon rises, share your hopes and dreams for 2021.
  - Reserve your spot by calling 269-651-2811 or email [cheryl@amigocentre.org](mailto:cheryl@amigocentre.org)
- April 12, 19, 26, 2020, an online **Transitional Ministry Training** will be held for individuals interested in pursuing this type of ministry. Transitional ministry offers a unique gift in a congregation's life. Whether a change in

pastor comes because of conflict, retirement, shrinking numbers and weariness, or questions of congregational viability, transitional ministry walks alongside a congregation while it answers questions of mission, courage and transformation. Visit [tmt.amigocentre.org](http://tmt.amigocentre.org) for additional information, or contact Amigo Centre at 269.651.2811 or [mandy@amigocentre.org](mailto:mandy@amigocentre.org)

- **SAVE THE DATE!** 23nd **Annual Camper Scholarship Amigo Centre Golf Scramble** will be June 5, 2021 at 8 am. Registration to come soon. If you are interested in joining and want registration information feel free to contact Amigo Centre at 269-651-2811 to have your name added to the list.
- **Summer Camp 2021 registration is open!** Also, 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](mailto:colton@amigocentre.org)for more information.
- **Scrapbooking, Crafting and Sewing retreat update:** we are currently only able to accommodate small groups. Instead of our normal large gatherings, the scheduled dates are limited due to providing all participants with a single room. We set groups of friends up in smaller areas to work (masks are still required inside). **Dates outside our already scheduled retreats are possible!** Call for availability – 269-651-2811.
- **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.* Here's a story about our project: <https://mcc.org/stories/addressing-conflict-caused-limited-resource> Visit our web site for registration and additional information.

### Amigo Programming Updates

- **Women and Girls' Retreat –March 19-21, 2021** has been cancelled. We have plans in process for a new date in 2022.

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### A word from MLT...

*By Duane Yoder, member of MLT and IMMC Treasurer*

This month MLT has been focused on the Conference Pastor Job Description. We conducted a survey to evaluate the essential functions and competencies that are important for the position. We are also gathering information from the Area Councils to broaden the perspective of the needs and concerns related to the position and qualities to look for in individuals that might apply.

The Conference Pastor's role has evolved through the changing times of IMMC. The focus is on current realities in our conference and the vision for intercultural competency that is needed for the future. Through prayer and discernment, we are committed to defining the position and identifying the qualities of the person needed to fill that position.

The first step to forming a search committee is the selection of a chairperson. The chairperson will then assist in the process of selecting search committee members. We are working towards the goal of posting the position and receiving applications in December 2020.

We appreciate your prayers, counsel, and assistance as we go through the process of finding the next Conference Pastor.

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## Celebrating

- While the reality of COVID-19 is frustrating and depressing, and impacting more of us as infections spread, we know that God is good all the time. In this month of November, we invite everyone to pause and be aware of God's good gifts even in this time. Give thanks to the Lord. Research shows those who share what they have tend to feel more satisfied – who can you share with?
- IMMC's first **Election Day Communion** service on Zoom! Many thanks to the CAMFell leaders who spearheaded the idea, those who helped the service come into being, and those from north to south who participated. Nearly 100 people registered, with a wonderful mix of individuals, couples, and families with children. Participants expressed great appreciation for the service, with some asking for more conference-worship times on Zoom.
- the third installment of the webinar series with Nekiesha Alexis. Having laid a foundation in the first two sessions, Nekeisha began turning toward practical steps for congregations. The fourth and final session is on December 8.
- the work of Missional Leadership Team (MLT). Missional Leadership Team is IMMC's governing board. It meets approximately every other month to oversee direction, monitor the use of conference resources in service to the vision, offer a big picture perspective and supervise the conference pastor. Two major agenda items this year are intercultural competence work and the conference pastor search.

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## Connecting

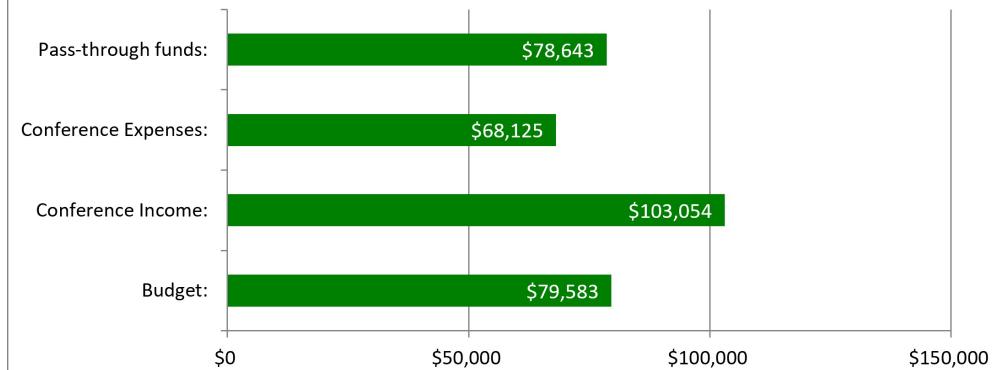
- Brenda Meyer, Naomi Yoder and Dan Miller attended the virtual sessions of Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) on October 16 and 17. Watch for a report next week.
  - This week, November 9-11, should have included the annual Pastor Gathering at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, MI. It became a victim of the pandemic. We grieve the loss of this time to gather in person. We are constantly looking for new ways to connect when we can't be together in person.
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## Credentialing and Leadership Development

- This month a small group of MI pastors and leaders began studying Efrem Smith's book, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming the Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World*. The group meets via Zoom.
  - In October, Sharon had contact with eight congregations in various stages of leadership transitions.
  - Four congregations are actively searching for new pastoral leadership. One recently named a candidate-of-choice to serve as their next pastoral leader and another – after months of prayerful waiting – recently learned they have a pastoral applicant.
  - Trained search guides continue to volunteer their time, offering a listening ear, an outside perspective, and an ongoing conference presence in pastoral search process.
  - **Looking for a next step?**—Have you been participating in the monthly webinar series with Nekeisha Alexis, and wonder about a next step? Or were you not able to participate and still wonder what you might do?
    - Mennonite Church USA has made arrangements with Widerstand Consulting to make anti-racism tutorials available to Mennonite Church USA congregations for a year at reduced cost. Information and pricing is available [here](#). Tobin Miller Shearer is a long-time advocate and educator.
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## Financial Updates

## Fiscal Year to date 7/1/2020 - 10/31/2020



## Oct-20



Our income varies from month to month and October was the month with low income. In spite of the income of only \$8,228 for October we are \$23,729 above expenses for the year. Thank you for your contributions.- *Jim Norton, IMMC Bookkeeper*

## Updates from Bethany Christian Schools

### Bethany Christian Schools to add third grade class

BCS will begin serving grades 3-12 in 2021-2022 school year.

Bethany Christian Schools announces the addition of a third grade class, currently enrolling for the 2021-2022 school year.

Adding this grade allows Bethany to begin its strategic movement towards serving the community as an independent school for students in kindergarten through 12. Bethany is a dynamic learning community in which students are known, loved and prepared for their journey beyond school. Up until now, Bethany has served grades 4-12.

"This is a great opportunity for more students to be part of a community where teachers creatively develop student's strengths, and faith is explored in a safe environment," said Rex Hochstedler, chair of the Bethany board and current Bethany parent.

The third graders will join fourth and fifth grade as part of the lower school, which emphasizes hands-on experiential learning with a focus on the fine arts, outdoor education, field trips, and a lively learning environment that make the Bethany experience unique.

Small class sizes allow students and teachers to connect on a deeper level. Because of this, students can grow and be challenged in a safe environment at Bethany—all the way through their senior year.

A parent of a current fourth grader emphasizes the importance of these connections saying, "You just feel like you're cared for from the faith perspective, but also that people are really invested in your child's development."

Bethany welcomes new inquiries and applications from interested 3rd grade families. Learn more at [bethanycs.net](http://bethanycs.net) and set up an Enrollment Consultation with Enrollment Director Trish Yoder at [admissions@bethanycs.net](mailto:admissions@bethanycs.net).

This exciting news comes on the heels of the completion of the Great Strides Capital Campaign and announcement of a planned groundbreaking to take place later this school year in the spring of 2021. [Read more about the reenvisioned athletic complex here.](#)

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## Corinthian Plan Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for The Corinthian Plan (TCP), MC USA sponsored health coverage, is November 1 – December 31<sup>st</sup> for a January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 start date. Go to <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/ministry/the-corinthian-plan/staff/> and contact your regional TCP Advocate for more information.

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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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