

Greetings IMMC delegates and leaders!

The Missional Leadership Team (MLT) is pleased to offer you an update regarding the Conference Pastor transition. Dan Miller, our conference pastor, announced this past September of his intention to conclude his role in Summer 2021. The MLT then set out to 1) engage in a review process to receive your wisdom and counsel regarding future expectations of this position, and 2) assemble a search committee with the hopes of hiring a new person by Summer 2021.

Fall Review Process

We are grateful for those who completed the survey we sent out in October, and engaged us in conversation through either Area Councils and individual or smaller group settings in November and December. Overall, the survey results suggest general affirmation of the current “basic functions” and time expectations related to the 1.35 FTE that comprise both Dan Miller’s (Conference Pastor) and Sharon Yoder’s (Conference Pastor for Leadership Transitions) roles. The information collected will now aid the search committee in their work. Similarly, the wisdom passed onto us from the five Area Council meetings has both benefited the MLT now and will also be passed along to the search committee.

Search Committee

We are grateful to seven people who have agreed to serve on this committee! They include: Wilma Bailey (Shalom), Heidi Burkhart (Maple River), Naun Cerrato (Piedra Viva), Suella Gerber (chair, Fellowship of Hope), Madeline Smith Kauffman (Waterford), Anna Johnson (Kern Road), and Duane Yoder (MLT, Fairhaven). They will meet for the first time around mid-January and continue throughout the Spring or until their work is complete. (*See attachment for complete bios and photos*).

Introducing a New Conference Ministry Team Model & a Candidate of Choice

We are grateful to the Spirit’s promptings and guidance these past few months. In the surveys and conversations Sharon Yoder’s name came up often with strong affirmation. As we talked with her we became convinced that her gifts are needed in the conference at this time. In conversation with Sharon, and because we believe it provides the kind of flexibility that benefits us at this time in our conference history, we propose:

1. that we hire co-conference pastors, both supervised by MLT, for a total of approximately 1.35 FTE, and
2. that Sharon Yoder be one of those pastors.

In our conversations with Sharon, though she had a growing interest and sense of call to continue with IMMC in some capacity, she was not interested in a full-time position. There are parts of the job description that excite her strengths and passions, such as care for all types of leaders in times of transition and long-term endeavors; organization and group-leadership skills; visioning, especially in collaboration with others; bridge-building; and navigating theological and ecumenical diversity.

Basically, we imagine that Sharon would continue in her current role, along with some additional responsibilities that will result in a .5-.8 FTE position. Overall, we believe Sharon's gifts and skills will help move our conference forward in ways that align with our *Renewing a Vision* focus. She is a gifted person with a profound spiritual depth, and comes to us with a rich assortment of life and ministry experiences. (See attachment for bio and photo).

The MLT's recommendation is to affirm Sharon Yoder as one of the Co-Conference Pastors starting Summer 2021.

Timeline to process this recommendation

- Week of January 4 - MLT will host several "Zoom gatherings" with delegates to further share about this recommendation, and receive questions (*more details later*)
- Week of January 11 - electronic vote on this recommendation
- Mid-January - the Search Committee begins to seek out a second Co-Conference Pastor with complementary gifts and skills to help our conference move forward (starting Summer 2021).

We invite your continued prayers in this time of discernment for our conference. And, look forward to further questions, counsel, and conversation with you in the New Year! :)

This information is also available on the IMMC webpage: <https://im.mennonite.net/conference-pastor-search/>

peace of Christ,
Missional Leadership Team
(Brenda Meyer, Bob Yoder, Naomi Yoder, Duane Yoder)