

DISTRICT CONFERENCE MINUTES

September 24, 2011

The 41st District Conference of South/Central Indiana was called to order by Moderator Robin Wentworth Mayer on Saturday, September 24, 2011, at approximately 9:30am following the morning worship service at the Logansport Church of the Brethren. Moderator Robin shared a message based on Romans 1:16-17 and the theme “Unashamed of the Gospel.” Officers for the conference were Robin Wentworth Mayer, Moderator; Mike Fry, Moderator-Elect; Dave Cox, Parliamentarian; Bev Donaldson, Secretary; and Scott Bowman, time-keeper. There were 140 delegates and a total of 188 people in attendance. Offering collected during the worship service was \$609. The Basket Auction brought in \$910. Both will go to the Ministry Training Endowment Fund.

The Moderator welcomed all attendees. There was a time of Consecration of the Delegates as they were seated. The officers of the Conference introduced themselves, and the Conference Rules were reviewed by the Secretary. Delegates voted to accept the District Conference minutes of 2010 as well as the 2011 District Conference Agenda.

Two Brethren Agencies reported to District Conference—On Earth Peace and Church of the Brethren. A short video presentation showing an overview of the shared ministry of all four Brethren agencies—On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, Brethren Benefit Trust, and Church of the Brethren. Reports were heard from On Earth Peace and Global Missions in partnership with the Church of the Brethren

- The Director of On Earth Peace, Bob Gross, shared 3 basic beliefs of OEP: 1. the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to live without violence; 2. COB is called to be unashamed of the gospel; and 3. the Church of the Brethren through Annual Conference has called OEP to act out that call. The annual report of OEP was included on a poster in the delegate packet. A short video presentation for OEP was shown thanking congregations for supporting the work of OEP.
- Jay Wittmeyer is the Executive Director of Global Missions in Partnership with the Church of the Brethren. He named some of the various ministry programs involved. These include Church World Service; Annual Conference; work in Brazil, Nigeria, North Korea, the Sudan, and Haiti; Brethren Historical Archives, Brethren Service Center, Brethren Volunteer Service, Ecumenical Relations throughout the world, Global Food Crisis, National Youth Conference, new church plants, Older Adult Ministries, Peace Conferences, Social Justice Ministries, Webinars, Brethren Press, work camps, Youth and Young Adults Ministries, Youth Peace Travel Team, Newline, Health and Human Resources, Christian Citizenship Seminars, etc. Delegates voted to approve these two reports. The Moderator prayed for these ministries to show our support and encouragement as these programs continue.

Barry Belknap, Director of the Ministry Excellence Project, reported that this agency is supported by the Lilly Endowment Fund as well as by Church of the Brethren congregations in the South/Central District and the Northern Indiana District. The primary goals of this agency are financial education for pastors and financial assistance for pastors. Pastor Aaron Gross told how grateful he was for this project and shared how it helped him financially as a pastor. Report was accepted.

The Disaster Response Coordinator Report was given by Cliff Kindy, District Director for Brethren Disaster Ministries. There is a need for 15 volunteers to work in Bellville, Tenn., Dec. 11-17, 2011. He encouraged delegates to ask for volunteers from their home congregations for this project. They may contact the District Office or Cliff Kindy. Report was accepted.

The District Executive Minister, Beth Sollenberger, presented the DEM report. She thanked the South/Central District of Indiana for allowing her to serve as the District Executive. She continues learning faces and people in various congregations as she works with these congregations. Beth reported seven newly licensed ministers. They are Ellen Adney at Bethel Center, Olinda Barnes at Pleasant Dale, Devin Chaulk at Pymont, Jason Metzinger at Pike Creek, David Owens at Grandview, Michael Smith at Northview, and Howard Wildermuth at

Buffalo. There are four newly installed pastors—Val Friedell at Huntington, Brian Mackie at White Branch, Steve Mason at Lafayette, and Allen Weldy at Rossville. Report was accepted.

The Financial Report was given by the Treasurer, DeEtta Balser. She explained the report—income, expenses, amounts in various funds. There was some discussion. Delegates voted to accept the report.

Moderator offered a prayer for these ministries as they continue their work.

The Manchester College report was given by Bob Barcus, member of the Manchester College Board of Trustees. Groundbreaking for the new campus of the School of Pharmacy in Fort Wayne has taken place. The School of Pharmacy will open in the fall of 2012. The Eli Lilly Endowment has funded \$35 million toward this project. There were 3 people who attended the White House Initiative which invited colleges to participate in Interfaith Services. Two former students were killed in the State Fairground tragedy that recently took place in August. Two retired professors passed away—Bill Eberly and Emerson Niswander. The enrollment at Manchester College has been increasing over the past 2-3 years. Manchester College is thinking about becoming a university. Manchester College appreciates the efforts and the support from the district congregations. Report accepted.

Mike Dilling presented the Camp Mack report. New buildings are now complete since the fire and will meet the needs and preferences of groups using Camp Mack. John Kline Center has been improved. It is almost all paid; \$300,000 is left. The waterfront has been changed and improved. The Becker Retreat Center will be a year-round center. \$2 million is needed for Becker; fundraising efforts are being developed at the present time. Reservations are about full for 2012. Report accepted.

Timbercrest Report was presented by David Lawrenz. Timbercrest continues to be rated in the top 5-10% in the state. Improvements are being made to make more private accommodations eliminating the semi-private rooms. Remodeling is being done to the Alzheimer facility. There are no long-term debts; financially Timbercrest continues to do well. All undesignated contributions go to the Charitable Assistance Program which helps residents financially. Report accepted.

Jeff Castetter presented the Standing Committee Report. He reported the various duties of this committee focusing mainly on discussing and deciding what to do with queries that come from COB congregations and districts. Jeff reviewed the queries and what was decided at the 2011 Annual Conference. Delegates were encouraged to send in nominations of people from their congregations for Annual Conference positions. Report accepted.

The Secretary read the 2011 Slate. Delegates were referred to the Appointments for Approval on page 8 of their packet. There was some discussion and a few corrections. Slate and appointments were accepted.

During the lunch hour, delegates were reminded to attend one of two Break-Out Sessions. Session 1 focused on Community Connections led by Moderator Robin Wentworth Mayer. Session 2 focused on Good Works, Good Benefits: Working our way through the Guidelines for Pastors Salaries & Benefits led by DE Beth Sollenberger.

Business continued after lunch.

Pastor Mark Stahl presented the recommendation regarding the closing of Windfall COB. Windfall was disorganized and the property was sold. Recommendation was accepted.

Pastor Mark Stahl presented the recommendation regarding the closing of Harvest Fellowship. Harvest Fellowship wants to withdraw and be removed from the Church of the Brethren. There was no building or property to be considered. Accepted.

Pastor Mark Stahl and DE Beth Sollenberger presented the recommendation regarding the closing of Pleasant View COB. Pleasant View voted to disassociate with the Church of the Brethren prior to notifying the District. After much discussion, delegates voted to table this recommendation for one year until 2012 District Conference.

DeEtta Balsler presented the 2012 Budget Recommendation for the District. After some discussion, delegates accepted the 2012 District budget of \$128,438.

The District Board Report was presented by Mark Stahl. He explained the search process for the present District Executive Minister at $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Opal Nees resigned from the District Board due to health issues. Bekah Houff had served on the District Board as interim District Youth Advisor 2010-May 2011. When the District closes churches, the proceeds are put into the Church Extension Fund. The Richmond loan and re-negotiation of repayment was explained. Report was accepted.

Passing of the Gavel: Moderator Robin passed the gavel to Moderator-Elect Mike Fry from Union Grove COB.

Newly-installed Moderator Mike opened conversations and discussion to all attendees about how we might become a more effective District. Some thoughts included to have sectional meetings, to volunteer for disaster relief work, to plant new churches, to be patient and wait on the Lord, and to look forward to the future.

Moderator Mike Fry closed District Conference around 3:45. Everyone was invited to enjoy ice cream and desserts before leaving.

Submitted by
Bev Donaldson,
District Conference Secretary