

**South Central Indiana Church of the Brethren
Minutes of the District Conference/ August 19, 2023**

The 2023 South Central Indiana District Conference was held in the Creative Finance Center, 2704 S Goyer Rd, Kokomo, Indiana.

Moderator Mark Stahl's and the conference theme was "Cross Training" using Luke 9:23 "Then he (Jesus) said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Following the **Singing/Gathering Music and Worship**, Moderator Mark Stahl began the business of this conference with the **Consecration of Delegates, Introductions, and Review of the Rules** of District Conference. 24 of our 38 congregations registered from 1 to 5 delegates. One of those groups did not arrive. 13 congregations did not register any delegates.

There were more than 20 non-delegates present.

Along with Moderator Mark Stahl and Moderator-elect Bruce Dunk, Kristen Roop served as Timekeeper, and Marie Willoughby substituted for Ann Cripe as Writing Clerk (Secretary).

Table Talk

At various times during the conference opportunity was given for those at each of the 15 assigned tables to talk with one another to learn to know folks from other congregations, to discuss what was presented, to celebrate the work in our congregations, and to think about how to excite those back home to doing more of Christ's work together in our district.

2022 Minutes and Agenda

The 2022 minutes and the 2023 agenda were accepted. The suggested time schedule for agenda items was amazingly accurate.

District Board Report

Chair Diana Bucher had all District Board members present stand in front with her. Along with the printed report on pages 13-14 in the conference book, Diana talked about the wide variety of pastors, congregations, activities, and beliefs we have in the district. During the Meet and Greet Gatherings for our new District Minister this spring the hunger to come together to sing, pray, and fellowship was reaffirmed. We are not independent congregations but need each other for support and leadership. The District provides many opportunities for all of us.

The District Board is made up of 2 representatives from each of our 5 sections. Sectional gatherings can be meaningful ways to support each other. Learn about our work in each report today.

District Financial Reports and 2024 Budget

Treasurer, Jim Bates, gave the **District Financial Reports**, printed on pages 15-25 in the booklet.

There were no questions. Then Jim explained the **2024 budget** found on page 26.

Some adjustments will be made due to the Annual Conference action on cost of living.

Following table talk, the budget was passed.

Presentation of Business Item

Bringing Balance to Indiana Camp Board Turnover p. 53

The presented proposal was a plan of how to ensure balanced turnover on the ICB over the next few years as they make the transition from board member term lengths of 3 years to 5 years. Camp Boar Chair Norm Waggy answered a question from the floor about the current plan that deals with resignation, death, or other reasons a person would need replaced. Item passed.

Moderator Mark Stahl turned the gavel over to Moderator-Elect Bruce Dunk to conduct the last business item, approval of slate and appointments.

Presentation and Approval of Slate and Appointments p. 32-33

Laurie Kieffaber Cornett of the Nominating Committee presented the Slate, then the appointments. All were approved. On the Slate: Tim Troyer, Huntington - Moderator-elect; Doug Veal North Section- District Board, Dan Kochensparger, East Section – District Board. Those present for all positions were asked to stand.

District Executive Minister's Report

Laura Stone read the opening of her printed report on page 10 and later the closing on page 12. Her report is formatted into the categories of her roles for serving the district. Where do pastors come from? People cannot relocate for a part time position. Calling folks out from within the congregation is working and needed. A lot of good things are happening.

At 10:35 a.m. conference attendees were given a short break for refreshments proved by Timbercrest.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ministry Credentialing Committee - Gene Roop p. 27

This has been a fruitful year with more interviews than most. We need leadership and we have a role in calling out ministerial leaders. 1) Individuals can sense a call and discuss this with trusted friends who encourages them. Congregations provide apprenticeships. 2) The congregation (persons within it) recognize ministerial leadership gifts in someone and encourages them to begin a course of study.

Time was taken to uphold Phillip Troxell in prayer. Phillip is the first graduate of the district's Brethren Leadership Institute and pastor at Peru, who had heart surgery this week.

Brethren Leadership Institute - Doug Veal p.31

Doug highlighted the excellent work that our District Office Administrator Sarah O'Hara does, especially as the record keeper and promoter for this group. Classes and instructors are listed in the report. Everyone is encouraged to take the opportunity to enroll and take classes at any time. You don't need to be part of the credentialing process.

Ministry Excellent Project - Phil Tomson p.50

A grant of \$350,000 from Lily in 2009 to both Indiana Districts has provided grants to pastors for a variety of purposes. In recent years it has been funded solely through donations. Unless there is more given the \$55,000 now in the treasury will end this program in 3-4 years.

Brethren Disaster Ministries - Cliff Kindy p. 41

Indiana has been a 'sweet' place but shootings, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, and other disasters could happen and will be increasingly more massive and get worse in years to come. Check out the booth in our exhibit hall and get involved in some way.

Standing Committee - Aaron Gross p. 28-30

Meetings and decisions made by Standing Committee before getting to Annual Conference were changed when 1/3 of the personnel on Standing Committee changes when they gather at the conference. This is a hard job and one represents the District not themselves.

A meeting of district delegates was held at Logansport in mid-August to discuss the actions of Annual Conference.

District Loan and Grant Ministry - Paul Shrock

Guidelines have been created for congregations to use to access funds set aside from the sale of the Christ our Shepherd building. Both loans and grants are available. Check the District website.

Church of the Brethren, Inc. Report - David Steele p. 46

Nancy McKrickard handed out printed material which General Secretary David Steele highlighted. He pointed out our denomination's focus on discipleship and God's justice and gave a number of statistics for recent programs.

Lunch break – several kinds of box lunches were available in the Food Line of the Creative Financial Center. Business and worship were in the gymnasium. The venue was quite accommodating.

Insight Sessions 1:00-2:00

Brethren Leadership Institute in Actions: History of the Church

A little taste of a class in one of the 12 courses led by Doug Veal, Wabash.

Healthy Churches: Faithful Pastors – Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together

Examining expectations of laity and clergy – led by Jan Largent, Union Center

Pie Auction 2:00 Dan Riccius, auctioneer

Great fun, with 12 desserts raising about \$1500 to benefit the Brethren Leadership Institute

We sang a hymn led by Fred Roop.

Brethren Agency Reports 2:30

Bethany Theological Seminary Tim Troyer, May 2023 graduate Printed report p. 35-38

Tim highlighted the new BOLD program which involves community engagement. Seminary study merges the heart, soul, and mind. Continue to pray for and support Bethany Seminary.

Eder Financial - Loyce Borgmann p.39-40

Services provided include retirement, insurance, and investments. We are good people with good products and services.

On Earth Peace - Mark Cripe p. 51

The South/Central Indiana group is helping with the national goal of training 1000 Brethren in Kingian non-violence. Ulrich Lodge at Camp Mack has been reserved for this event on November 10-12, 2023. Brouchures are coming. Activate people for Gun Violence Prevention.

Reports

Manchester University - Megan Sarber p.48-50 Alumni Relations ('07 grad)

After Campus minister, Bekah Houff, left early this year this ministry has been shared by the Alumni Office and the faith-based areas led by Katy Grey Brown. For several months in the Spring Tim Troyer led weekly chapel services and prepared the Baccalaureate service. Camp Mack Day had 550 attendees last year. Katy offered teaching gardens. Of the 1217 students enrolled the fall of 2022 only 18 are from the Church of the Brethren.

Camp Alexander Mack - Norn Waggy, Board Chair Gene Hollenberg, director p.45

Other Camp Board members were invited to stand and be recognized. Camp has a great impact on the district, the church, and our lives. Even though we are down 60% of campers since COVID 19 we are in better shape than other districts. Church leadership happens at camp. A Day Camp is being offered during school breaks this fall. Tomorrow, August 20, is the Dedication and Open House of the newly renovated Ulrich Lodge.

Doug Veal encouraged us to attend the annual Camp Mack Festival on the 1st Sat. in Oct. Norm Waggy said we can all help at camp. The average age of camp team leaders (deans) was 74 this year.

Timbercrest Senior Living Community p. 52

3:33 p.m. With Bruce Dunk and Tim Troyer sitting in the center of the room, folks gathered around for **the laying on of hands and prayers** by Mark Stahl and Laura Stone.

Passing of the Gavel

Mark Stahl passed the Moderator's gavel to Bruce Dunk, as is the tradition. Bruce read John 17:20-24 and asked God to be with us all.

Adjournment

The 2023 South Central District of the Church of the Brethren District Conference was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Mhw

Draft version reviewed and approved by the District Board on November 4, 2023.

These minutes will not be considered official until approved by the 2024 District Conference.