

DISTRICT CONFERENCE MINUTES

September 22, 2012

The 42nd District Conference of South/Central Indiana Church of the Brethren met at the Marion Church of the Brethren on Saturday, September 22, 2012. At approximately 9:10, Moderator Mike Fry called the meeting to order following the morning worship service. The theme of the conference was Complete JOY! Peacefully, Simply, Together! based on Philippians 2:2. Moderator Mike Fry opened with announcements, prayer, and welcoming all in attendance. There was a time of consecration and seating of the delegates. He then introduced the officers for the conference: Moderator Mike Fry, Moderator-Elect Guy Studebaker, Secretary Bev Donaldson, Time-keeper Bev Nicholson, and Conference Coordinator Melody Bowman. Conference Rules were reviewed by the Secretary. There were 122 delegates in attendance. Offering collected during the worship service was \$801.25. The baskets auction totaled \$1,198. Both will go to the Ministry-in-Training Endowment Fund.

Minutes of the 2011 District Conference and the Agenda for the 2012 District Conference were both accepted by the delegates.

Jeff Castetter presented the Standing Committee report. There were 2 items of unfinished business at the 2012 Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. The first item was guidelines for Congregational ethics which had been revised in 1996. More time was needed. It will be presented at the 2014 Annual Conference. The second item was responding to changes to the Earth's climate. More time was needed on this item also. It will be presented at the 2014 Annual Conference as well. Items of new business at Annual Conference 2012 included several items: equality of nominating men and women to Annual Conference leadership positions; equitable geographic representation on the Ministry Board; revitalization of Annual Conference by 2015; first reading of Ministry Leadership polity-changes made by 2013-2014; approved revision of polity on Districts--housekeeping type items; removed treasurer from the Program & Arrangements Committee; working on a vision statement for Church of the Brethren Ecumenical Witness; worked on a resolution paper titled A WAY FORWARD with Mission Ministry, OEP, and Program & Arrangements. Delegates accepted Standing Committee report.

David Sollenberger shared from the Vision Statement Committee. He and Walt Wiltscheck presented a "Peter-Paul" skit focusing on what to do with a vision statement. What does the Church of the Brethren do to carry out the vision statement in our life? We need to put the vision into action. Congregations need to discuss this to be the courageous disciples God intends us to be.

District Board report included members of the District Board sharing their congregational activities: financial support, outreach activities, prayer walk, youth activities. There will be a District Worship Service April 21, 2013 for all congregations in the South/Central Indiana District. All are welcome to attend. There will be more information about this event. Board

members included Mark Stahl, Bob Ewert, Sue Lowe, Bill Bowman, Brad Yoder, DeEtta Balsler, Pam Oliver, Dean Beery, & Tom Allbaugh.

Mark Stahl shared issues facing the District Board included Pleasant View and Roann. The District Board withdrew the recommendation to table the closing of Pleasant View from the 2011 District Conference. They now recommend the closing of the Pleasant View Church of the Brethren. Discussion included a brief summary of events leading to this recommendation. Question of why would they withdraw from the COB was asked. Answers were due to "theological differences and a sense of hurt; that the District let them down." After discussion, motion to close the Pleasant View Church of the Brethren was accepted.

Beth Sollenberger presented the DEM report. This report recognized ministers and pastors for their years of service. Linda Barnes, Jonathan Crandall, and Kevin Whitmore were recognized as being ordained since the 2011 District Conference. For five years, Enten Eller, Rob Miller, Mark Stahl, and Brian Mackie were recognized. Gary Yoder was recognized for serving 15 years. Janet Hildreth was recognized for serving 20 years. Serving for 25 years, Kevin McClung and Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm were recognized. Serving for 30 years, Terry Shumaker, Joan Deeter, and Sue Breiner were recognized. Phillip Kessler and Eugene Roop were recognized for serving 45 years. Donald Miller was recognized for serving 55 years. Gordon Bucher and Harold Statler were recognized for serving 65 years. Charles Lunkley was recognized for serving 70 years, and Olden Mitchell was recognized for serving 80 years.

DeEtta Balsler presented the Financial Report on page 17 of Conference booklet. Several items were pointed out. A major concern is that the District may be out of funds in the very near future—a year and a half, possibly. Churches and congregations need to send in their fair-share that will help the District continue to operate. Motion to accept was passed.

Ministry Interview Committee report was presented by Peter Michael. This committee works with those called out to a set-apart ministry. They prepare and interview candidates—including mentors, experience, and education.

Cliff Kindy presented the Disaster Response Coordinator report. He continues to look for volunteers to help with disaster work. Groups have helped with relief work in Alabama and Virginia from tornado damage. There is a couple in Ashland, Tennessee heading up relief work in that area. Tornado damage in southern Indiana involved local volunteers; the Disaster Response Committee did not help with that area due to the many volunteers from the local areas.

Robin Wentworth Mayer presented the 2013 Slate from page 6 of Conference booklet. Delegates passed the 2013 Slate.

Walt Wiltscheck presented the Manchester University report. Manchester is now a University since July 1, 2012. There are new buildings on campus; the new College of Pharmacy in Ft. Wayne, IN; a pharmacy doctoral program started with 70 students; two Masters programs—Education and Athletic Training. Enrollment for fall 2012 includes 400 new students of which

20 are new Church of the Brethren students. There is a ROBOT Team which leads worship in local congregations during fall and spring. Manchester is now sending out an electronic newsletter. Camp Mack Day is making a comeback; there were 60 students attending this event this fall. Manchester University brought two recommendations to District Conference. The first recommendation was to approve James Colon for the at-large Board Trustee. This was approved by the delegates. The second recommendation was to approve three changes to the Articles and By-laws—changing the size of the board from 37 to eventually 25 members; changing the three categories of trustees to all being at-large trustees; streamlining governance and management issues to align with the best practices for governance. Question was raised why these changes; answer was to reduce expense and districts would recommend instead of directly approving. This recommendation was approved by the delegates.

A reminder for the Breakout sessions was announced: 11:30-12:30 Duane Grady and 12:30-1:30 Rex Miller. All were invited to attend these sessions.

Timbercrest Report was presented by Dave Lawrenz. Timbercrest has received a 5 star government rating. They are making available private accommodations for singles and 4 semi-private accommodations for couples. Things are going well from occupancy to being financially sound (debt free). There are continuing projects but without debt. Timbercrest continues to provide a healthy, positive, wholesome environment for its residents. In 2013, Timbercrest will celebrate 40 years of servicing residents. The Character Assistance program helps residents financially to stay at Timbercrest. Churches contributions help fund this program. Friends of Timbercrest are selling cookbooks for \$15. There are 200 full-time employees at Timbercrest.

After lunch, the Business Session reconvened. There was a prayer request for the Nigerian Church.

The 2013 Slate was approved by the delegates.

Mark Stahl and DeEtta Balsler presented the 2013 Budget which totals \$127,323.00. This is \$1,115 less than the 2012 budget. There was much discussion and questions about the recommended budget. There was no interest in District Youth Coordinator so there was \$0 in the 2013 budget. There were other suggestions to cut costs for a more affordable budget. The District Board recommended that District Conference approve the 2013 Budget as presented. Budget was approved .

The Brethren Agencies Report began with a Power Point program. The four agencies are Brethren Benefit Trust, Bethany Seminary, On Earth Peace, and Church of the Brethren. Jennie Williams reported about Bethany Theological Seminary and their partnership with Church of the Brethren and South/Central Indiana District. Bethany is revising their curriculum with new courses, and reformatting present classes; focusing on missional church philosophy, evangelism and social justice, conflict management, bi-vocational courses, distance learning studies, increased access to Bethany resources, weekly worships, workshops available

to congregations and youth leaders, partnering with other Brethren colleges. The first week of April 2013, there will be a Presidential Forum involving other Brethren colleges. Loyce Borgman presented the Brethren Benefit Trust report. She explained three areas-pension, insurance plans, and foundation.

Barry Belknap presented the Ministry Excellence Project report expanding from the report on page 37 in the District Conference booklet.

The Camp Mack Report was presented by Rex Miller. The report is on page 34-35 of the Conference booklet. Rex shared scripture from Isaiah 43:18-19. The theme is "Finding the Secrets of the Kingdom: Parables of Jesus." There has been a 5% increase in giving since the fire. Camping programs are continuing and doing well. Chris Kelsey and Janet Shoue are going off the Camp Mack Board. Rex shared and thanked the many volunteers who continue to cook and bake for the Camp programs. A campaign called "Growing from the Ashes" was announced to fund the rebuilding of Becker Lodge.

District Board Appointments were approved.

Passing of the Gavel and Installation of new District personnel:

Moderator Mike Fry passed on the gavel to Guy Studebaker. All new District personnel were invited to come to the front of the sanctuary. DEM Beth said a prayer installing all in-coming new District personnel.

Guy Studebaker shared a few words and thoughts citing Isaiah 53:5 scripture. He suggested we support the District with our finances and prayers of healing. Guy closed the Conference with prayer.

Dismissed around 3:30. Ice cream was served.

Submitted by
Bev Donaldson
Secretary