

2015 PNMC Delegate Session Minutes

PNMC Annual Delegate Session – June 19-20, 2015
Lebanon Mennonite Church, Lebanon, OR

Delegate Session #1 Friday 10:45 am

Jennifer welcomed the delegates and introduced guests:

Marlene Bogard – Executive director of Mennonite Women USA
Iris deLeón-Hartshorn – MC USA Director of Transformative Peacemaking
Ken Hawkey – Anabaptist Mennonite Bible Seminary, Associate Director of Development
Duncan Smith- Director for Corinthian Plan
Marisa Smucker- Mennonite Mission Network, Church Relations Associate
Joshua Janzen – Ministry Inquiry Program Student from Bethel College serving at Salem
Halle Steingass Ministry Inquiry Program Student from Goshen College serving at Zion

PNMC Affiliated Organizations

Karen Litwiller – OR Mennonite Residential Services
Ron Litwiller – Mennonite Village

Table groups were given time to get acquainted with each other, review the table group covenant, and pray.

The minutes of the 2014 Kalispell, MT delegate session were approved as presented in the Delegate Handbook. **MSC: Linda Dibble, Jack Swaim**

ECM Report

Katherine Jameson Pitts

Katherine named examples of ways our mission statement-- “make strong connections throughout the conference” – was lived out this year.

- Anawim applied for a Seed NorthWest grant for a storage shed and laundry facilities to be used by the homeless population. The matching portion was raised quickly from among other PNMC congregations
- Many congregations held joint worship services with other PNMC congregations, many congregations participated in service projects with each other, and congregations had speakers from other PNMC congregations.

A focus for the year was to revisit and renew our relationships with affiliated Mennonite organizations to support their missions in the Pacific Northwest. Conversations with Western Mennonite School regarding the lawsuit and the nature of our relationship are ongoing.

Nurturing healthy congregations remains a priority, especially assisting in pastoral transitions.

- Two new pastors were called this year:
Victor Fuentes (Comunidad Cristiana de Vida Nueva)
Larry Moskwick (Spring Valley)
Katherine gave each of them a flask of anointing oil to represent their anointing as pastors and our blessing as a conference.

- Seattle Mennonite completed a pastor search, calling Megan Ramer to join them in the fall of this year.
- Prince of Peace, Alaska and First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen, Idaho are starting pastoral searches.
- There was no turn over in District Pastors this year. Katherine prayed for the District Pastors.
- Marc Schlegel-Preheim, Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship, Boise ID, was approved for ordination. Katherine prayed a prayer of blessing for him.

Katherine was appointed as Vice-chair of Mennonite Church USA's (MC USA) Constituency Leadership Council (CLC).

Looking ahead, Katherine hopes to promote personal spiritual development and work at ways for us to call each other to fulfill God's purpose for the world. The world needs us to be deeply rooted in our relationship with Christ.

Treasurers Report

FY 15

The year ended with a \$10,916 budget surplus instead of a \$23,615 deficit as budgeted.

Income exceeded expectations: congregational giving was \$5943 over budget and the 2014 Annual Meeting brought in \$4441 more than expected.

Expenses were under budget overall including staff expenses and Annual Meeting expenses.

Administrative expenses were the one category over budget due to translation expenses and insurance costs coming in higher than expected.

FY 16

The budgeted deficit of \$29,283 reflects an expected decrease in congregational giving of \$3796 as well as a \$5684 increase in budgeted expenses due to increases in staff costs, travel reimbursements, and translation services.

Questions from delegates:

How is the budget YTD? – The timing of congregational giving varies, but seems to be comparable to other years at this time.

It was noted that the balance statement is not in the Delegate Handbook. The balance statement as well as YTD for FY16 will be sent to delegates via email attachment.

Jennifer introduced interpreters: Danny Arguello and Felix Rosales

Jennifer introduced the ballot:

Nominees for Affirmation by Delegates

Tom Brenneman, Zion Mennonite Church – Secretary

Kathleen Aeschilman, Albany Mennonite Church – At-Large Member

Bob Buxman – Portland Mennonite Church – Gift Discernment Team

Brent Kauffman, Lebanon Mennonite Church- Gift Discernment Team

PNMC Board of Directors appointments:

Matt Yoder, Menno Mennonite Church – completing 4 year term for exiting Director

Gloria Nussbaum, Portland Mennonite Church – Conference Historian

Beth Landis, Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship– PNMC Representative on West Coast MCC Board of Directors

Gerry Langstraat, Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship—Sanctuary Property Management Chair

Randy Friesen, Eugene Mennonite Church – Finance Team

Darrel Wisseman, Bend Mennonite Church – Finance Team

Delegate Session #2 Saturday 8:30am

Jennifer opened with prayer and a devotional from “Jesus Calling.”

Dwelling in the Word -- Leo Hartshorn

Luke 24: 44-49 with prayers and readings from session 5 “The word for the Journey” from “On the Way,” a spiritual discernment guide written by Leo Hartshorn for MC USA churches in preparation for convention.

Action Item

Delegates were asked to fill out the ballot presented in yesterday’s delegate session. Ballots were completed and collected.

Discernment

Jennifer and Samuel introduced the discernment process.

Iris de León-Hartshorn led the group in the discussions and survey completion.

- Each person filled out “snap shot” survey with seven questions about personal views regarding same-sex orientation. People were asked to describe their personal view using a scale of 1 (more traditional view) to 5 (more inclusive view). During the break, board members compiled this data by transferring this individual information to seven large papers on the walls (one for each question) using sticky dots to illustrate the range of individual opinions.

Table groups were asked to discuss their observations about the compiled “snap shot” information.

Some table feedback shared with the larger group includes the following:

Polarity exists as the majority of dots on every paper were at either 1 or 5 with fewer dots between. This polarity reflects our culture’s polarity. Our differences arise from differences in how we read and interpret scripture

Iris shared that the 6 member MC USA cabinet took this survey and their result showed the same spread of opinion. The breadth of views in the PNMC is reflective of the larger church.

- A second question was distributed – “Can we be church together in the midst of our different views on how the church should respond to same gender attraction?” People answered individually and turned them in. Results were again reflected on a piece of newsprint with dots.

Table groups discussed the above question and “snap shot” of responses. Some table feedback shared with the larger group includes the following:

Responses to this question were polarized also. We need to continue to converse. Have we lost confidence with each other? How does so much polarity affect ministry?

- Discussion Question: “How do we remain church together with these differences?” Table groups were asked to come up with three ideas in response to this question. Ideas are written on papers that are placed on the wall for consideration by the entire group.

During break, the idea papers were put into groups with others of similar content. Each person was given 3 dots to place on the groups they felt would be most helpful for PNMC to remain together.

Delegate Session #3 Saturday 3:30pm

Jennifer announced the affirmation of the ballot.

Jennifer introduced Nancy Kauffmann, MC USA Denominational Minister.

Iris continued to lead the discernment process.

The four responses to “How do we remain church together?” that got most dots are as follows:

Listen and share stories, Practice forbearance, Emphasize fellowship, Rely on the Holy Spirit and prayer

Iris gave an opportunity for final sharing:

Miguel Castillo stated he speaks for six CIHAN churches and Warden Mennonite. CIHAN churches share the belief that the Bible teaches that marriage is to be between one man and one woman, and they support the Mennonite Confession of Faith that states this. He stated that if conference is leaning toward the inclusion of homosexuals, CIHAN will contemplate withdrawing from PNMC. They have formed a commission of five people to give attention to this.

Jennifer Delanty referred to the PNMC Policy on Termination of Membership and asked that any churches who choose to withdraw follow this policy.

John Beechy inquired as to what efforts CIHAN has made to understand the more inclusive viewpoint.

Meg Lumsdaine, pastor of Evergreen Mennonite, speaking for herself, said that while she is comfortable with monogamous same sex relations, she is troubled that including this minority will cause the loss of the minority voice of people of color.

Pat Hershberger noted the efforts made in the past to bring groups in to the PNMC. She referred to Paul's teaching that calls factions to work together, suggesting that God calls us to a greater unity than the issues of our day.

Kevin Schumacher, of Calvary Mennonite stated he stands with CIHAN. He shared his personal perspective on homosexuality and that he believes the Bible is clear that homosexuality is a sin, calling leaders and pastors to take a loving stand.

Halle Steingass, Ministry Inquiry Program Student from Goshen College serving at Zion, stated that arguments where people do not have mutual respect for each other do not go over well with her generation. She suggested that finding common ground amidst disagreement is important if the church is to be passed on to the next generation.

To close the Discernment Process, the group sang "You are all we have."

Moderators Report Jennifer Delanty

1. The Board set priorities that supported congregations.
2. Significant time was given to discerning a way forward with the Sanctuary property. A new agreement between the tenants, Bethel and Anawim, and PNMC is in progress.
3. The Gift Discernment team worked hard to fill the ballot.
4. Board members and staff enjoyed visiting congregations.
5. Board members and staff had involvements beyond the Pacific Northwest including MC USA's CLC, the Israel/Palestine tour hosted by MC USA, a Doctrine of Discovery seminar, and in a couple weeks, the national conference in Kansas City.
6. A finance team was created to give attention to financial health.
7. Board members committed themselves to working together and centering their discernment in Jesus even though they have different convictions regarding homosexuality.
8. Katherine signed a contract for a second term.

Jennifer invited new and returning board members forward for prayer.

The meeting was closed at 4:20.

Zion invited the conference to their church for next year's Annual Meeting, June 24, 25, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda Dorsing,
PNMC Secretary