

PNMC Annual Conference in Ritzville, WA: Love Builds Up
June 24, 2017

Delegate Session, A.M.

1. Roll Call—Moderator Jack Swaim welcomed participants and called on member churches to share “we stand with our neighbors by or who ...”.
2. Sharing around tables:
 - ECM Katherine Jameson Pitts asked that table groups introduce themselves, then build a Lego block structure that demonstrates how congregations are “building up” in their community.
3. Approval of 2016 Minutes: There was a motion (Lenae Nofziger) and second (Amy Epp) to approve the minutes, and it was affirmed.
4. ECM Report (Katherine Jameson Pitts):
 - Our primary task is to nurture healthy congregations.
 - There are 32 member congregations of PNMC currently. River of Life and Logsdon Mennonite Church have both withdrawn this year. Katherine emphasized that the process for withdrawal from the conference has some important steps. Spring Valley Mennonite Church has decided to close after 90+ years of ministry. The congregation has dropped down to 10 regular attenders. They will have a closing celebration. We shared a time of prayer for this congregation as they move on in their Christian lives. Anawim Christian Community is now operating in 2 different branches. One will be a benevolent organization that will not have a religious affiliation, while a small group will continue to meet with Pastor Steve Kimes and remain a member of PNMC. Anawim is also withdrawing from its rental of the Peace property.
 - There are two new pastors in PNMC, Kevin Chupp from First Mennonite in Aberdeen, ID, and Britt Carlson, pastor of community life at Portland Mennonite Church.
 - There are five congregations currently searching for pastors—Menno Mennonite, Prince of Peace of Alaska, Salem Mennonite Church, Albany Mennonite Church, and Evergreen Mennonite in Seattle.
 - Both Filer Mennonite and Eugene Mennonite will be seeking pastors due to the retirements of Tim Gascho and Rose Marie Zook Barber.
 - The District Pastors team will remain the same as last year. An evaluation of the District Pastor program will occur this summer.
 - Seed NW Grant Program—It’s a matching grant program. Lebanon Mennonite has applied for a grant to work with the Boys and Girls Club. International Bethel City Church received a grant to bring in musicians from around the US for a fundraiser in July. PNMC is going to suspend this program as it currently exists and introduce some changes in order to improve its effectiveness; but Rick Troyer and Joseph Penner would love to have new members to help disperse funds.
 - Constituency Leadership Council—Jack Swaim is now the vice chair of this group.
 - Sexual Abuse Prevention Panel—Pastors have been encouraged to attend a Healthy Boundaries workshop. We now have the ability to provide the training in our area in English and Spanish. We are exploring ways to prepare a team to respond to accusations of sexual abuse, and Katherine is encouraging individual congregations to work on connecting resources in their communities.

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5. Treasurer Report (Brett Tieszen):

-Peace Property (Sanctuary/Peace property)—The property was professionally appraised. If it were to be sold, the appraiser recommended selling the property for church use since doing so would bring a higher value than selling it for housing use. The Board has decided to sell the property (please refer to the Moderator Report, some of which preceded the Treasurer report).

-Last year's Peace property rent proceeds were mostly put back into the property. The Peace property had a negative income in the past fiscal year, although it had been slightly positive in previous years.

-Aggregate revenue from member congregations was at 98% pledged budget. Staff expenses were under budget. Program expenses came in under budget. Travel expenses were under budget as well as annual meeting expenses. We had one unexpected expense from the Pacific Mennonite Historical Society because we gave them a \$6,000 block grant that was used to address some unexpected and serious plumbing problems. We were about \$14,000 in the red on our budget, but most of this is because of expenses to the Peace Property. (See Brett's report for more detail).

-Year to date giving is better than expected for Fiscal 2018 at this time.

6. Presentation of Ballot:

-Jack distributed the ballots for delegates to use to affirm nominees and to recommend others for future consideration. He explained that the Board of Directors has 10 positions in total, with varying terms and with a rotating schedule of which positions to fill each year. The delegate body affirms nominees for most of the positions, although the Board appoints two positions.

-The Gift Discernment Team includes five positions, of which the delegate body affirms two nominees each year.

-The Board also appoints persons for positions on the Pastoral Leadership Team, with input from the Gift Discernment Team.

-Jack introduced persons who have been nominated for the Board as well as the Gift Discernment Team; he also confirmed the Board's appointments for the Pastoral Leadership Team, the Sanctuary Property Management Committee, and West Coast MCC Board representative from PNMC.

7. Announcements:

-On July 27-30 the Bridgefolk Program will be held in Seattle and all are welcome.

-Camp Camrec will have a celebration and fundraising event on Sept. 1-3; all are welcome.

Delegate Session, P.M.

1. Reports from Discussion Groups

2. Moderator Report (Jack Swaim)

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-Jack described the past, present and future use of the Peace Mennonite Property. Since 2010 Anawim Christian Community and International Bethel City Church have had rental agreements with PNMC to use the property for their respective ministries, while they discerned (2010 through 2013) whether to purchase the property from PNMC. The PNMC Board has reiterated that longer term it doesn't want to be a landlord.

-The Board has actively explored alternative uses for the property while continuing the rental agreements, with a focus on the possibility of developing the property for low-income, affordable housing; one of the considerations was potentially including a meeting space for congregational and possibly neighborhood use. Updates about alternative use were shared with delegates in last year's annual meeting and again in the 2017 Conference Communications Council. After about two years of exploration, the Board determined that the financial and regulatory barriers were too high, and so PNMC will sell the property. Jack thanked Brett Tieszen for his leadership in this exploration.

-Concurrently, Anawim is ending its rental agreement. International Bethel City Church is now interested in purchasing the property, and another group has expressed interest as well. A small workgroup is pursuing the details of selling the property. At the same time, Gerry Langstraat will continue to chair the Property Management Committee that addresses operational management as long as PNMC owns the property. Jack recognized Gerry for his ongoing leadership of this committee, and Barb Buxman for her support as Board representative on the committee.

-The Board met five times during the last year. We always began with a prayer and worship time.

-Discerning the future vision of Conference was one of the primary board topics this year. There were many sources of input and dialogue, such as delegate input at the 2016 annual meeting and the 2017 Conference Communications Council, input from board conversations with PNMC member congregations, and discernment during all board meetings in conjunction with seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit. A focus on how we stand with "neighbors" emerged as a primary theme for the future vision for PNMC—particularly because it resonates with the passions and actions of our member congregations who have identified a wide range of neighbors.

3. Affinity/Discussion Group Session—Topics discussed were:

- How do we stand with those who are immigrants—Wendell Amstutz
- How do we stand with those who are homeless—Rhoda Blough
- How do we stand with Indigenous communities—Jennifer Delanty
- How do we stand with those who are marching for justice—Megan Ramer
- Confronting racism—Iris de Leon-Hartshorn
- How do we stand with those who are in Israel and Palestine—Rod Stafford
- Resolving conflicts in the congregation—Duncan Smith
- How do we build Ecumenical/Interfaith relationships—Marlene Kropf
- How do we stand with children and youth—Curt Weaver
- Faith formation for adults—Nancy Kauffmann

4. Ballot Results

- People who were nominated were affirmed.

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5. Announcements and Thanks

-Next year's annual conference will be held in Boise, Idaho in late June 2018. Kathy Bilderback and Marc Schlegel-Preheim invited all to participate.

-All participants thanked the team from Menno for such warm and effective hosting.

6. Blessing and Closing

-Nancy Kauffmann offered a blessing for the Board, members of Pastor Leadership Team, Gift Discernment Team, and PNMC staff.

Minutes submitted by Tom Brenneman, PNMC Secretary