

- GATHERING MUSIC** The Brooklyn First CoB Praise Band led the congregation in gathering music.
- CALL TO ORDER** At 8:30 a.m. on October 5, 2019, the 50th Annual District Conference Business Session, of the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren, was called to order by Moderator Brian Berkey. The theme of the session focused on “Living the Legacy” from Job 29:2-3. Moderator Berkey thanked the Brooklyn Praise Band and introduced the officers and administrators of the conference. He noted that Don Fitzkee’s message at the Friday evening worship service was wonderful and is available to view on the ANE District website.
- CONFERENCE OFFICERS PRESENT** Mr. Brian Berkey, Moderator, Mr. Ray Flagg, Treasurer, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Clerk, Mrs. Karen Hackett, Moderator-Elect.
- CONFERENCE PERSONNEL & DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF PRESENT** Mr. Timothy Speicher, Parliamentarian, Mrs. Jennifer Balmer, Timekeeper, Mr. Pete Kontra, District Executive, Krista Dickson, Office Administrator, Kelly Bernstein, Communications Manager & Interim District Conference Coordinator, Don Mitchell, Director of Church Development & Evangelism, Kay Weaver, Director of Stewardship, Mary Etta Reinhart, Director of Witness & Outreach.
- WELCOME** **Moderator Brian Berkey** welcomed delegates and non-delegates, reminding that all may ask questions and participate in discussion, while only delegates may vote on business items. He emphasized the importance of preparation for the session through prayer and reading through conference materials. Mr. Berkey welcomed first time delegates especially and asked them to stand.
- PROCEDURES** **Moderator Berkey** noted that delegates must complete the form in their packet of materials and give to an usher in order to make an amendment. Verbal amendments will not be accepted. Speakers should use the microphone and not speak from the floor, addressing the moderator as Brother Moderator, with their name and congregation.
- MOTION** The agenda was moved and seconded to be approved as presented in the delegate packet. The agenda was adopted unanimously without amendment.
- GROUP PRAYER** The Moderator led a group prayer and time for sharing what good things God is doing within our congregations (referenced on page 10 of the conference booklet).
- ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE** **Mark Clapper '96, Executive Director of College Engagement Opportunities** and Board member of Bethany Seminary, welcomed the delegates and other attendees on behalf of Elizabethtown College and its new president, Dr. Cecilia McCormick. He also brought greetings from Jeff Bach, Director of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, while also noting the recent \$2 million expansion of the internationally renowned Center.
- DISTRICT EXECUTIVE** **Pete Kontra, District Executive**, reported as recorded on page 16-21 in the conference booklet. Mr. Kontra delivered a moving address emphasizing Mark 11-12,

and focusing on the Greatest Commandment. He encouraged the delegates to ask themselves the three questions traditionally asked prior to participation in Love Feast: 1. Are you still in the faith of the gospel that you declared at baptism? 2. Are you, as far as you know, at peace and in union with the church? 3. Will you still labor with the brotherhood for an increase of holiness both in yourself and in others?

DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported as recorded on pages 22-24 in the conference booklet. He introduced the members of the district board as well as the ministry directors and office administrative staff, all of whom stood. He thanked this team who carry out our district ministries for being willing to answer the call.

COMMISSION ON CHURCH DEVELOPMENT AND EVANGELISM

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported as recorded on pages 26-28 of the conference booklet. The conference body heard an update from Ryan Braught, pastor of Veritas CoB who recently was recognized as a congregation at Annual Conference.

COMMISSION ON NURTURE

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported as recorded on pages 28-29 of the conference booklet. The conference body was informed about a training event on February 28-29, 2020 that is focused on Youth Leader training. Dana Statler and Matt Ross emphasized the Global Leadership Summit opportunity for training held in August.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported on the Commission on Ministry as recorded on pages 30-31 in the conference booklet. The conference body was informed about the Spanish training opportunities through SeBAH. Eric Ramirez spoke in Spanish while English translation was displayed in a PowerPoint.

COMMISSION ON WITNESS AND OUTREACH

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported as recorded on pages 32-35 of the conference booklet. A short summary and video were presented regarding the Urban Ministry Initiative's event in September at Indian Creek.

COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP

Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair, reported as recorded on pages 36-38 of the conference booklet. Megan Lester spoke of the importance of attending the Stewardship University training workshop that is offered every March.

THE WAY FORWARD WORKING GROUP

Pete Kontra, District Executive, reported on the May 23rd meeting of the working group. On June 20th, 2019, a meeting team was appointed by the ANE District Board. The group has been tasked with bring reports and recommendations, within the boundries of the district's mission statement. He noted that the group is greatly encouraged about working together and feel that God truly is guiding their work, allowing the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts.

FINANCES

Ray Flagg, Treasurer, reported on the finances of the ANE District and the 2019 ANE District Ministry Investment Plan as recorded on pages 43-48 in the conference booklet. He noted that approximately \$35,000 less was given by congregations since last year, but that district expenses are also down by \$30,000 compared to last year.

He stressed that the board is taking the financial health of the District very seriously, trimming unnecessary expenses. He asked for prayers for our district and its finances.

MOTION The District Board recommends the adoption of the 2020 Ministry Investment Plan as presented with a \$547,769.31 budget. The plan was adopted unanimously.

MOTION The District Board recommends the adoption of the \$55.00 per member recommended fair share, with a stretch goal of \$65 per member. The fair share recommendation was adopted with five delegates opposed.

2020 SLATE **Karen Hackett, Moderator-Elect**, on behalf of the Gifts Discernment Team, presented the 2020 slate as recorded on pages 52-58 of the conference booklet. Mrs. Hackett reminded the attendees that only delegates are eligible to vote on the slate. The ushers distributed the slates. The slates were then collected from the delegates.

HYMN **Laura Meiser, Chorister and Ryan Arndt, Accompanist**, led the conference body in the singing of *I Love to Tell the Story*, Hymn 358.

CAMP SWATARA **Tim Courtright, Executive Director of Camp Swatara**, reported on his first days as Executive Director. He noted that it is a season of transitions at the Camp and commented that of the seven year-round staff, that four have not been there for a full year. He noted that there is a lot of light and life in the staff: fresh ideas, dreams and vision.

COMPELLING VISION **Kay Weaver, ANE District Director of Stewardship**, also of the Compelling Vision Team, reported on the Compelling Vision Process as recorded in pages 59-61 of the conference booklet. She noted that the team met in Elgin with the Compelling Vision Working Group. She stated that the two groups are now combined and are referred to as the Compelling Vision Team. She noted that the team is working towards having a presentation given to the District Mission and Ministry Board and to the District Executives by the end of 2019.

STANDING COMMITTEE **Mark Baliles** reported on the actions of Standing Committee as recorded on pages 62-63 of the conference booklet. Mr. Baliles appealed to everyone to participate in the nominating process through the www.brethren.org website.

BRETHREN DISASTER RELIEF AUCTION **Evelyn Dehmey** reported on the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction as recorded on page 64 of the conference booklet. She noted that \$326,599 were distributed to disaster relief. She also reported that the 2019 auction raised an estimated \$385,000, down about \$50,000 from last year. She expressed the belief that attendance also seemed to be down. She announced that the Kick-off Dinner featuring the Tribute Quartet will be held on June 13th, 2020. Mrs. Dehmey concluded by noting that many of the long-time leaders are leaving due to aging, and that the organizers are reevaluating profits and profit-margins due to diminished sales in some areas. She expressed concern that we not become weary of doing good.

- BREAK** The Brooklyn First CoB Praise Band provided music during a break time.
- YOUTH** **Donna Lefever-Hoover, Volunteer Interim Director of Nurture, and Ed Haldeman, ANE Youth Advisor** presented on youth activities and youth cabinet. They reported that only 3 youth were on cabinet this year, in large part due to the district's inability to fill the youth ministry position. They suggested that regionalization of youth activities might be more productive and that regional activities may be better attended than whole district activities.
- COBYS FAMILY SERVICES** **Mark Cunningham, Executive Director, and Anne Stokes, Director of Development,** reported on COBYS as recorded on pages 65-66 of the conference booklet. Mark reported that giving was down by more than \$700,000 from last year, but only due to a large bequest in 2018. He reported that over 6000 hours of therapy were provided to children and adults. He also reported that there were 42 adoptions and 79 families receiving post permanent placement services. He stated that every family is our family, every child is our child. He stated that we are ever mindful to be faithful to God in all we do.
- BRETHREN BENEFIT TRUST** **Scott Douglas** reported on the BBT as recorded on pages 68-69 of the conference booklet. He stated that the BBT helped three families keep their homes from foreclosure in the last year. He showed the video "Wise and Faithful Stewards."
- ON EARTH PEACE** **Bill Scheurer, Executive Director,** reported on On Earth Peace as recorded on pages 70-71 of the conference booklet. He noted that those in the ANE District are among the most faithful supporters of On Earth Peace. He asserted that conflict may be seen as an important tool to seek justice and that peace is not the absence of tension but the presence of justice. He noted that the organization focuses on a Jesus-centered spirituality and that one third of financial support comes from congregations.
- HYMN** **Laura Meiser, Chorister and Ryan Arndt, Accompanist,** led the congregation in the singing of *The Wonderful Grace of Jesus*, Hymn 150.
- SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY MINISTRY CENTER** **Donna Rhodes, Executive Director, and Karen Hodges, Program Coordinator,** reported on the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center as recorded on pages 72-75 of the conference booklet. They stated their gratitude to the ANE District for being one of the strongest partners along with Southern PA, Middle PA, Western PA and Mid-Atlantic Districts.
- BRETHREN HERITAGE** **Amanda Dolan,** a descendent of Alexander Mack, presented on Brethren Heritage as recorded on pages 76-77 of the conference booklet. She asked the conference body to consider how lineage may tie into the truth of God's word. She asserted that being a child of Christ is far more important than being a Mack. She asserted that above all we are to love God. She finished by praying that all of us may know our loving savior Jesus Christ, that we may come together around the word of God and remain holy.

- LUNCH** **Brian Berkey, Moderator**, led the conference body in prayer and then adjourned the morning session for lunch and insight sessions at 12:15 p.m. Instructions were given. The delegates were encouraged to join their assigned tables for Living Our Vision small-group discussions by 1:15 p.m. The small-group discussion led to submissions of answers to three guiding questions.
- HYMN AND RECONVENING** The afternoon session was called to order at 2:35 p.m. following the singing of *Brethren We Have Met to Worship*, Hymn 8.
- SHARING OF LIVING OUR VISION DISCUSSIONS** **Timothy Speicher, Wyomissing CoB**, shared the belief at his table that there is a disconnect between congregational and district activities. He suggested that congregations need to be more involved at the district level.
- Angel Gonzalez, Nuevo Amanacer CoB**, shared the concern at his table that our youth are fading away from our churches, leaving the conservative church and joining mega-churches.
- Liz Bidgood Enders, Ridgeway**, shared that her table found a wonderful connectedness that happens at events like the disaster relief auction. She suggested that at such events people come from all over and theological divisions fade away, like a family reunion where Brethren gather, trying to contribute to something significant for all of us.
- The Moderator thanked Paul Brubaker, Pam Reist, Jeff Glisson and the entire team of facilitators for their leadership.
- MOTION** It was moved out of committee, on the recommendation of the ANE District Board to adopt the proposed changes in the Plan of Organization as noted on pages 79-102, as presented and amended including the following addition be made to Article X:
Amendments: Addendum: Southern Border:
“The boundary then extends south along the Delaware/Maryland Stateline to Tr. 6 (Millington Rd). At Rr. 6 (Millington Rd) on the Delaware/Maryland Stateline the boundary moves east along Rt. 6 (Millington Rd) to Woodland Beach.”
- Jeff Glisson, Board Chair**, noted that it has been 25 years since the Plan of Organization was reviewed in its entirety. He noted that additions and deletions were noted in red and that most are simply updating the document to reflect current nomenclature and responsibilities. These include updating roles and relationships of various agencies and committees.
- FRIENDLY AMENDMENT** **Enten Eller, Ambler**, offered a friendly amendment to drop the words “more fully” from page 80, Article II: District and Sections, paragraph one. Mr. Glisson, on behalf of the committee, agreed.

AMENDMENT **Matt Gladhill, Middle Creek**, moved that the word “receive” be changed to the word “approve” in Article III.A.7. The amendment was seconded.
The amendment was adopted with six delegates opposed.

The motion to adopt the changes to the ANE District Plan of Organization as presented and amended was then unanimously approved as amended.

CLERK’S REPORT Friday Night Worship Service Attendance: 188
Children’s Disaster Relief Offering: \$1867.00
Bible Study Attendance: 28
Saturday Morning Attendance: 287
Saturday Afternoon Attendance: 229
District Ministry Offering: \$457.91
Delegates: 169 present out of 173 registered
Total possible delegates: 244
Congregations and Fellowships: 58 present out of 55 registered
Represented out of a possible: 74 (note this does not include Projects)

SLATE PRESENTATION REPORT 163 slates returned
129 affirmed
34 exceptions

MOTION TO ACCEPT **Mr. Enten Eller, Ambler**, moved to accept the reports as submitted. This was seconded. The reports were accepted as submitted by a hand vote.

CONSECRATION AND TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP Leadership was transferred to the Moderator-Elect, Karen Hackett, Wilmington CoB by Brian Berkey. 2020 Moderator Karen Hackett announced that the theme for the 2020 conference would be centering on Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God.” Karen encouraged all to read the Psalms in the coming year, to be still and seek God’s guidance.

CLOSING **Mr. Brian Berkey** thanked everyone involved in the conference. Participants were encouraged to submit evaluation forms as important feedback for the Program and Arrangements Committee. The conference closed with the singing of *Faith of Our Martyrs*, Hymn 413.

Respectfully submitted,
D.L. Nyce, Clerk