

- CALL TO ORDER** At 9:00 a.m. on October 3, 2020, the 51st Annual District Conference Business Session, of the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren, was called to order via MS Teams by Moderator Karen Hackett. The theme of the session focused on “Be still and know that I am God” from Psalm 46:10. Moderator Hackett noted that due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, many other districts had cancelled their conferences. She thanked Kelly Bernstein in the District Office for her dedication and hard work in organizing a virtual conference for the ANE District. She introduced the officers and administrators of the conference present in the District Office. She also thanked Ryan Arndt from the West Green Tree Church of the Brethren for sharing his beautiful music this morning.
- CONFERENCE OFFICERS PRESENT VIA MS TEAMS** Mrs. Karen Hackett, Moderator, Mr. Ray Flagg, Treasurer, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Clerk, Mr. Scott Moyer, Moderator-Elect.
- CONFERENCE PERSONNEL & DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF PRESENT VIA MS TEAMS** Mr. Brian Berkey, Parliamentarian, Mr. Pete Kontra, District Executive, Krista Dickson, Office Administrator, Sue Eikenberry, Way Forward Team Chair, Kelly Bernstein, Communications Manager & District Conference Coordinator
- WELCOME** **Moderator Karen Hackett** welcomed delegates and non-delegates, reminding that all may ask questions at any time, though there are two dedicated times for questions in the program. She led the participants in a word of prayer.
- MOTION** The revised agenda was moved by Scott Moyer, delegate, and seconded to be approved as presented in the delegate packet.
- BUSINESS ITEM #1** Delegates were instructed to proceed to their email, open Business Item #1, Adoption of Revised Agenda, and take 5 minutes to consider the item and place their vote.
- The revised agenda was adopted as presented. 108 Approve; 1 Do not Approve; 1 Abstain.
- DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR** **Jeff Glisson, Board Chair**, spoke about the potential positive impact of the Way Forward report and covenant on doing ministry together. He noted that the Board unanimously adopted the covenant. He stated that we should look to the Way Forward Report as a vision for the future of our ministry as a district.
- DISTRICT EXECUTIVE** **Pete Kontra, District Executive**, spoke about the background and conversations about what it means to be the church in the world today that have brought us to the Way Forward vision and covenant. He noted that for us to discern a way forward for us as the ANE District we have focused on beginning intentional conversations and actions about our purpose in Christ and what brings us together.
- DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR** **Jeff Glisson, Board Chair**, spoke about the future work of the Way Forward Team and especially about continuing to develop a culture of honor, respect and humility in the Church of the Brethren. He listed the eight recommendations of the report

and spoke to their importance, noting that a six-person Way Forward Team has been called to implement the recommendations, developing the Way Forward ministry in concert with the ANE District staff and board. He encouraged everyone, especially delegates and leadership, to read the report, discuss it with congregation members and to forward questions, suggestions, and concerns to the ANE District Office. Brother Glisson also volunteered to meet personally with congregations if requested. He concluded by recognizing that the work of implementation will be difficult and that perhaps it has begun a little late, but that this is important work and with the help of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, the way we do ministry together will improve in new, exciting and productive ways.

WAY FORWARD TEAM CHAIR **Sue Eikenberry, Chair of the Way Forward Team**, spoke to recommendation number two of the Way Forward Report, the development of a culture of respect, honor and humility. She spoke to the opportunity presented by the disagreement and disunity in the Church of the Brethren: to deal with the conflict in as Godly and Christ-like a way as possible, in both our acting and our reacting. Sister Eikenberry quoted Dr. Arthur Brooks' sermon given at this year's national prayer breakfast, that most important crisis facing our nation and many other nations today is a "crisis of contempt." She defined this as the widely held conviction that those who disagree with us are contemptuous and worthless. She noted that Dr. Brooks stated that in politics today we treat each other as worthless, which is why our interactions are so bitter and cooperation feels nearly impossible. She suggested that we are witnessing the same sort of bitterness and contempt in the church. Sister Eikenberry reported that the Way Forward Team decided to come up with a way to create the opposite spirit in our interactions as brothers and sisters. She noted that our spiritual mandate comes from Romans 12:10, "outdo one another in showing honor." She noted that team worked to build honor and respect on the team and will be working to expand this culture of honor and respect to our relationships throughout the district.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE **Pete Kontra, District Executive**, spoke about what he sees as the district's greatest need: how we relate to one another, and how this our manner of relating impacts on our ability to move forward. He noted that Covid 19, intercultural relations, the political climate, etc. are all impacting on our congregations. He suggested that politicizing everything is not what we are called to be. He noted that this is not the vision of God for our church, that the example of Jesus shows us that we are to show our neighbors that there is a different way of living from that of the world; one that is about loving, serving, healing, and inviting others into the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Brother Kontra asserted that this is what it means to move forward, to do Jesus's work in the world, so that all will know we are His disciples through the love we show one another. He asserted that nothing is more important.

DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR **Jeff Glisson, Board Chair**, also spoke about what he sees as the district's greatest need: how we relate to one another, and how our manner of relating impacts on our ability to move forward. He emphasized the damage that occurs through a lack of respect in our interactions. He suggested that what we see in all media regarding issues of Covid 19, racism and politics in our nation does not exhibit a culture of honor, respect, and humility. He suggested that we have observed this same lack of

respect in some of our interactions in the Church of the Brethren when we have discussions about issues about which we have differing perspectives. Brother Glisson stated that we in the Church of the Brethren, and the broader church, should be setting an example of honor, respect and humility in our interactions, just as Jesus Christ, our servant leader, related to and talked to people. He suggested that this is an opportunity to plant seeds in our society by relating and talking to one another in a Christ-like way. He suggested that embracing the Way Forward Covenant and building a culture of honor, respect and humility, will enable us to focus on the ministries that we agree share the important message of Christ, advance God's kingdom and impact people's lives through service. He noted that as we walk together, we will stumble, but that the Way Forward offers us a road-map to acknowledge our stumbles, discuss them and move forward from our stumbles.

WAY FORWARD TEAM CHAIR **Sue Eikenberry, Chair of the Way Forward Team**, led the delegates and other participants in the ANE District Conference in activities designed to assist in the development of a culture of honor. She noted the terrible loss experienced by all of us and asked all to reflect on the loss of voices, perspectives, gifts, talents and leadership in the departure of congregations from our district. The activities ended with a playing of a portion of "The Blessing" in a time of blessing and release of those we have lost.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE REPORT **Pete Kontra, District Executive**, thanked the district leadership and staff for their leadership and service. He especially thanked Kelly Bernstein for her work to make the virtual conference possible. Brother Kontra reported as recorded on pages 6-10 of the conference booklet. He noted that the past year has been challenging for all us. He asked us to consider whether we will address the many issues facing us, (including Covid 19, intercultural relations, political climate, and theological differences) as conflicts to divide us, or opportunities to be the Church. He urged the delegate body to be the Church, and thanked God for our ministers, pastors, chaplains and deacons for their leadership through the past year. He stated that our ministers are all innovators in Christ, dealing with the new and challenging. He highlighted the good work of the Ministry Commission as they continue their work in calling new ministers and in encouraging and supporting present ministers. He asserted that there is nothing more important of our relationships, to love God and to love others. He asserted that it takes humility and living out Grace to love one another and to listen to others with understanding. He asserted that none of us has perfect understanding ourselves.

DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR AND COMMISSION REPORTS **Jeff Glisson, District Board Chair**, reported as recorded on pages 11-14. He expressed his appreciation for the services of the Moderator and District Executive. He noted that our preference would have been to meet on the campus of Elizabethtown College, but noted that we are fortunate to be able to have this conference virtually. He thanked Kelly Bernstein for her organization and leadership. He noted that one goal of the District Board in the past year has been to provide information and guidance from the District so that congregations may make informed decisions about their response to Covid 19, including how to hold virtual worship. Brother Glisson listed a number of other ways in which the District and

Denomination have shared information regularly through the year, including through the Annual Conference Moderator Town Halls. He noted that District ministries have continued throughout the Covid 19 pandemic. He also highlighted the Commissions Reports on pages 15-28 in the conference book: "2020: Our Ministries, Our Story" and recommended it to all. He noted that it outlines the ministerial work of the many ANE District Commissions. Brother Glisson concluded by highlighting several ministries including the ANE Urban Ministries initiative "Beyond the City Limits" program and the ANE Facilities Assistance Fund. He recognized the long-time service of the late Brother John Stoner as Treasurer of the ANE and his gift to the ANE District through his estate of over a half a million dollars. Brother Glisson noted that \$286,790 has been set aside as a reserve for the district's operating expenses, while another \$286,790 will be available to congregations through the ANE Facilities Assistance Fund.

FINANCES

Ray Flagg, Treasurer, reported on the finances of the ANE District as reported on pages 15-16 of the supplemental handout and on pages 29-38 of the conference book. He spoke to the current financial report, the auditor's financial statement, the 2021 ministry investment plan and concluded by introducing Business Items 5 and 6 (recommended by the District Board). Brother Flagg highlighted the fact that that congregational giving was down \$18,730.00, but noted that district leadership have worked hard to manage and lower expenses, lowering them by \$28,625.00.

DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR

Jeff Glisson, Board Chair presented background information on Business Items 2, 3 and 4.

2021 SLATE

Karen Hackett, Moderator, on behalf of the Gifts Discernment Team, presented the 2021 slate as recorded on pages 40-43 of the conference book and through a video presentation.

MOTION

Scott Moyer, Moderator-Elect, and Delegate as a member of the East Fairview Church of the Brethren, moved the affirmation of the 2021 slate, Business Item # 7, as recommended by the District Board.

QUESTION TIME

Karen Hackett, Moderator, announced that the floor was now open for questions on the reports presented. She suggested that it is preferable to use the Q and A area for questions, but that phone calls may also be made to the District Office at this time. Several questions regarding the disorganization of the Midway and Cocalico congregations were addressed by Brothers Glisson and Kontra.

MOTION

Business Items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were moved out of committee by the District Board.

INSTRUCTIONS

Karen Hackett, Moderator, instructed the delegates present to go to their two emails from the District Office, open them, then consider and vote on Business Item numbers 2-7.

BUSINESS ITEM # 2

Approve the disorganization of Midway CoB. 121 Approve; 1 Don Not Approve; 2 Abstain

- BUSINESS ITEM # 3** Approve the name change of Lirio de los Valles. 124 Approve
- BUSINESS ITEM # 4** Approve the disorganization of Cocalico CoB. 122 Approve; 1 Do not Approve; 1 Abstain
- BUSINESS ITEM # 5** Approve the 2021 District Ministry Investment Plan. 119 Approve; 2 Do not Approve; 3 Abstain
- BUSINESS ITEM # 6** Approve the Fair Share Giving and Stretch Amount. 108 Approve; 7 Do not Approve; 9 Abstain
- BUSINESS ITEM # 7** Approve the 2021 Slate. All were affirmed with more than 2/3 vote.
- WORSHIP MUSIC** **The Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren Praise Team** shared the songs *Akhekho Ofano No Jesu* (There's Nobody Quite Like Jesus) in Zulu, *Stand Up and Give Him Praise*, and *Because of Who You Are*.
- MODERATOR** **Karen Hackett, Moderator**, thanked the Harrisburg First CoB Praise Team for their leadership and sharing in worship music. She announced that business items 2-7 had passed.
- BRETHREN DISASTER RELIEF AUCTION** **Tom Fritz, Chair**, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented a recorded report on the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction. He announced that the 2020 auction has been cancelled due to health and safety concerns caused by the Novel Corona Virus. However, he announced that individual giving continues and that in some cases congregations have taken special offerings to support disaster relief.
- CAMP SWATARA** **Tim Courtright, Executive Director**, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented a recorded report on Camp Swatara.
- ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE** **Cecilia McCormick, President**, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, presented a recorded report on Elizabethtown College, and as recorded on pages 47-51 of the conference book.
- YOUTH REPORT** **Linda Dows-Byers, Director of Youth Ministries at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren**, on behalf of herself and Ed Haldeman, District Youth Advisors, presented a recorded report on Youth Ministries in the ANE District.
- BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY** **Jeffrey Carter, President**, presented a recorded report and as recorded on pages 52-53 of the conference book.
- MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD** The "You are a Living Letter" video was presented on behalf of the Mission and Ministry Board and their report was presented as recorded on pages 56-57 of the conference book.
- ANNUAL CONFERENCE** **Paul Munday, Annual Conference Moderator**, presented a recorded report. He

- MODERATOR** stated that in Jesus Christ we will find our feet again on fresh pastures of promise.
- A TIME OF WORSHIP** **Ann Bach, Audrey Hess Estep, and Randy Estep** presented *Be Still*.
- COBYS FAMILY SERVICES** **Mark Cunningham, Executive Director**, presented a recorded report, and as recorded on pages 58-59 of the conference book.
- SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY MINISTRY CENTER** **Donna Rhodes, Executive Director**, presented a recorded report, and as recorded on pages 60-62 of the conference book.
- QUESTION TIME** **Karen Hackett, Moderator**, announced that the floor was now open for questions on the reports presented. She suggested that it is preferable to use the Q and A area for questions, but that phone calls may also be made to the District Office at this time.
- MINISTRY RECOGNITION** **Pete Kontra, District Executive**, recognized several ministers as recorded on page 21 of the conference booklet. He highlighted the 50 years of service in ministry of George Snively of the Elizabethtown congregation. Brother Kontra also lifted up the ordination of Lynn Allebach of the Hatfield congregation and Naomi Kraenbring of the Elizabethtown congregation. He finished by lifting up the licensing of Laura Hamilton of the Stevens Hill congregation, Josiah Reimold of the Mechanic Grove congregation and Cynthia Wright of the East Cocalico congregation. He also noted the interim service of Dennis Garrison at Myerstown, John Hostetter at Mt. Wilson, Ervin Huston at Lebanon, Bob Kettering at East Fairview, Mary Etta Reinhart at Paxton, and Donna Lefever-Hoover at Mt Wilson. He urged the body to celebrate new congregational placements for Don Fitzkee at Lancaster as Pastor of Worship, Jason Good at Swatara Hill as Pastor, Christopher Shelly at Lampeter as Pastor, Bill Wink at Richland as Pastor and Misty Wintsch at Lancaster as Pastor. He concluded by congratulating new ACTS and SEBAH graduates, and by remembering those ministers who have passed on in the last year.
- CLERK'S REPORT** **Scott Moyer, Moderator-Elect**, presented the clerk's report on behalf of Doug Nyce, ANE District Clerk.
Friday Night Worship Service Attendance: 140 viewers
bcmPeace Offering: \$820.00. Update: as of print, offering is \$1261.00
District Conference Saturday Session: 148 viewers participating
Delegates: 110 present out of 141 registered
Total possible delegates: 226
Congregations and Fellowships: 48 present out of 53 registered
Represented out of a possible: 73 (note this does not include Projects)
- MOTION TO ACCEPT** **Scott Moyer, East Fairview CoB**, moved to accept the reports as submitted. This was seconded. The reports were accepted as submitted digitally. 105 Accept; 0 Do not Accept; 0 Abstain
- WORSHIP MUSIC** **Laura Meiser, Hempfield CoB**, sang and played *New Wine*, as recorded.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Jeff Glisson, Board Chair, responded to a remaining question regarding congregational withdrawal. The questioner asked if there are other congregations withdrawing, and if so, can we wait until next year to finalize. He noted that Lewiston and the Heidelberg congregation have begun discussions with the district. He further noted that there is a distinction between congregations that wish to withdraw and congregations that are disorganizing. He continued by outlining the difference and the processes and approvals involved.

**CONSECRATION AND
TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP**

Leadership was transferred to the Moderator-Elect, Scott Moyer, East Fairview CoB by Karen Hackett. 2021 Moderator Scott Moyer expressed his admiration for Karen's service through a time of family loss. He announced that the theme for the October 1st and 2nd, 2021 ANE District Conference would be centering on Colossians 3:8-17 and specifically on the theme "Be Renewed in Christ." He asked that God renew us with His power, and not ours. He asked that we clothe ourselves in God's peace, thankfulness, and forgiveness, showing ourselves as representatives of Jesus in all we say and do.

CLOSING

Scott Moyer, 2021 Moderator, thanked everyone involved in the conference and urged everyone to continue to live peacefully, simply, and together. Delegates were encouraged to complete evaluations via the link on the business session email or the ANE District website. The conference closed with a recorded postlude arranged and played by Ryan Arndt.

Respectfully submitted,
D.L. Nyce, Clerk