

ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT CONFERENCE
Leffler Chapel and Virtually, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

October 2, 2021
Saturday

CALL TO ORDER

At 9:00 a.m. on October 2, 2021, the 52nd Annual District Conference Business Session, of the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren, was called to order live and via Cisco Webex by Moderator Scott Moyer. It was noted by Brother Moyer that this is the first ever “hybrid” district conference. The theme of the session focused on “Be Renewed in Christ” from Colossians 3. Moderator Moyer thanked Enten Eller and the technology team for their work and led the gathering in prayer. Moderator Moyer noted that there is no time in the agenda for breaks, but that breaks are to be taken individually as needed. He thanked Kelly Bernstein in the District Office for her dedication and hard work in organizing the conference for the ANE District. He also introduced the officers and administrators of the conference as well as the presenters. Moderator Moyer encouraged the assembled to lift their voices in song, standing and singing with gusto. He also thanked the 24 individuals from throughout the ANE District who participated in the leadership of music and praise.

**CONFERENCE OFFICERS
PRESENT**

Mr. Scott Moyer, Moderator, Mr. Ray Flagg, Treasurer, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Clerk, Mr. John Hostetter, Moderator-Elect.

**CONFERENCE PERSONNEL &
DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF
PRESENT VIA MS TEAMS**

Dave Stauffer, Parliamentarian, Pete Kontra, District Executive, Krista Dickson, Office Administrator, Enten Eller, Church Video Streaming Specialist, Interim, Kelly Bernstein, Communications Manager & District Conference Coordinator, Megan Lester, Time Keeper, Kay Weaver, Online Q and A Moderator, Mark Myers, Doug Hallman and David Vasquez, Tech Team Members

MOTION

The revised agenda was moved and seconded to be approved as revised and presented by email and as an insert in the delegate packets.

BUSINESS ITEM #1

Adoption of Revised Agenda

The revised agenda was adopted as presented, with in person and online voting.

WELCOME

Mark Clapper, Executive Director of College Engagement, welcomed delegates and non-delegates, on behalf of Cecilia M. McCormick, President of Elizabethtown College and referred the assembled to the college report found on pp. 9-12 of the conference booklet. He reminded the assembled that his role at the college includes the oversight of church relations. He shared that the college has begun the academic year with an incoming class of 485, the largest such in the last five years. He noted that the overall enrollment is more than 2,100 students in all of the programs of the college, with students representing 14 different states and various countries. He noted that many of the assembled may be graduates or know graduates of Etown. He noted that the founding values continues to be upheld since 1899, including a commitment to peace, non-violence, service, social justice and human dignity. He noted that the college administration are interested in engaging with CoB congregations in the future and that CoB students are of great interest; students who share those founding values.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

Pete Kontra, District Executive, thanked the Moderator and all sisters and brothers wherever they may be. He referred the assembled to pp. 13-16 of the conference booklet for his report. Brother Kontra noted that there is much happening within the church, the world, and our lives, and that he continues to sense a strong call to serve as district executive. He noted that he is always open to conversation and to answering questions about what is happening in the district. Brother Kontra went on to highlight some important things we've experienced together over the last year and a half. He stated that God speaks through the prophet Isaiah: do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. I am making a way through the wilderness. He asked what we see and went on to list four things he is seeing: 1. That we are tired and stressed, 2. That we are resilient, creative, and creating new ways of meeting our congregational needs and those of the community, 3. That we are in the midst of tremendous change, a paradigm shift in the denomination, working our way through the Way Forward Program in our district and denominational ministry, and 4. That we have experienced a revealing of our current spiritual maturity; that trials reveal this through how we react, whether we choose fight or flight, whether we open up and give or close in and protect ourselves. He continued by noting that he's seen the good and the not so good, knowing full well that he is not perfect in this. He asked that we humbly pray to God for his grace in working through this. He stated that he sees no reason to fear, noting that fear can cause us to do many things that are not usually productive...to self-protect, to retreat from the world, to objectify our neighbor or brother or sister, to see control. He asserted that fear makes you small and is not how God created us to live. He stated that he did not see much fear in Mary Magdalene, as she became one of the first to financially support Jesus's ministry. Brother Kontra went on to remind us of Peter's fearlessness to follow Jesus to a whole new ministry to the Gentiles. He stated that God's got it, that he sees no reason to fear, but rather sees reason to go boldly into what is next. He went on to pose the question of what the church will look like post-pandemic. Brother Kontra asserted that this is a question that is one of the most important, that we must ask it together, and that we must not assume that we know the answers. He suggested that we live more fully into God's purpose and that one thing that rose up during the pandemic was what masters we serve. He stated that Jesus made it quite clear that we can only serve one master and if it's not him, then what is it? Brother Kontra asked if it was a political party? He stated that we cannot underestimate how deeply this has influenced us in the church. He noted that we Brethren don't display American flags in the sanctuary, because our allegiance is to God above all else. Brother Kontra asked whose voice it is we are listening to daily? He wondered if maybe our masters are ourselves at times. He suggested that when we have a conflict over wearing masks in the church, or how we talk about racism, or who has all the answers, or what new thing God is doing in the church, this conflict is a symptom of not living out of our true selves. Brother Kontra asserted that God himself through Christ humbled himself in walking all the way to the cross and death for each one of us. Brother Kontra wondered whether our master is sometimes the institutional church. He noted that as the disciples gazed at the temple, Jesus told them not one stone would remain, that all would be thrown down. Brother Kontra asked if our polity, our organizational policies, how we do church, if through these

our master is Jesus Christ. He suggested we read through Acts. He suggested in Acts that there is no structure as we know it now, just believers meeting together, living and giving together, boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, in spite of persecution. He stated that he prays that God moves in our midst. He implored the assembled to join in doing this good work together. Brother Kontra concluded by asking that God continue to bless us as His Church, the body of Christ, and that we never lose sight of what is most important: our love of God and love of others.

**DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR
AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

Jeff Glisson, Board Chair, referred the assembled to the District Board, Directors and Commissions Reports on pp. 17-41 in the Conference booklet. He spoke about how the ministry of the district connects to and supports the ministry done in congregations. He encouraged the delegates and non-delegates to share the report with their home congregations and noted that when the district directory is released in January, a copy of the report will be included, and that it will also be available on the district website. Brother Glisson noted that if a congregation would like a representative of the ANE to visit with them, that they should please reach out to the District Office. Brother Glisson described when several years ago a picture of each fellowship, project or congregation was displayed and each representative placed a cup of water in a fountain. He went on to note that as each representative is a member of a congregation, that each District Board member and staff member is a part of a congregation. He asserted that congregational ministry is intended to impact people's lives for Christ and that the role of the district is to support and facilitate these congregational ministries: peacefully, simply and together. He asserted that we should act as disciples who work at being Jesus in our neighborhoods and that the fountain of water represents the district and congregations working together to be a spring of living water throughout the district. Brother Glisson went on to describe ministries, leaders and programs contained in the report and highlighted the need for the support of these ministries. In closing, Brother Glisson noted that the ministries discussed this morning and presented in written reports represent the work of many individuals who work as a team to carry out district ministries. He thanked the ANE District Conference delegates and non-delegates for their commitment and service in advancing the ministries. He stated that it has been a real joy serving as Board Chair. He asserted that the CoB has a message that the world needs to hear: peacefully, simply and together. He encouraged all of the assembled to get out in their neighborhoods, to be Jesus in their neighborhoods and to share that message, as well as a cup of cold water and a hand of Christian Fellowship. He led the congregation in prayer.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

Brother Kontra noted that this is Brother Glisson's last report at District Board Chair and that he has been grateful for Brother Glisson's commitment, for his work while maintaining a very busy schedule in his own employment, and for knowing him as a brother in Christ.

DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR

Brother Glisson asked that everyone please read the reports and ask any questions they may have. There were no questions. He went on to note that the next part of the agenda celebrates growth and impact. He described the first phase of congregational life as a project, then moving on to a fellowship, then a congregation.

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He noted that the delegates are asked for their approval of these movements in Items 2 and 3, and that this is required by CoB polity. He noted that the following items are motions out of committee, and that not further motion or second is needed.

BUSINESS ITEM #2

The District Board recommends the movement from Project to Fellowship: Ebenezer (located at Lampeter CoB, Hispanic Latino, Spanish speaking project of 50 members).

A video introduction was shown in Spanish with English translation.

There were no questions.

The item was approved unanimously, with in person and online voting.

BUSINESS ITEM #3

The District Board recommends the movement from Fellowship to Congregation: Un Nuevo Renacer (at Mountville CoB)

There were no questions.

The item was approved unanimously, with in person and online voting.

BUSINESS ITEM #4

The District Board recommends the Church Development and Evangelism Commission name change (p. 22 in the booklet)

There were no questions.

The item was approved unanimously, with in person and online voting.

BUSINESS ITEM #5

The Disorganization of Mount Zion Road Church of the Brethren.

Brother Jeff Keller of Lebanon CoB asked if Mt. Zion received an additional year to prepare for this step.

Brother Jeff Glisson responded that the year of transition for both items 5 and 6 was 2019-2020. He noted that this action should have been taken last year but was missed. He noted that it must be done officially due to the legal implications.

The item was approved with one in person opposed and one virtual abstention.

BUSINESS ITEM #6

The Disorganization of the Brunswick Fellowship.

One delegate from the Hempfield CoB asked the delegates and non-delegates to pray over these two bodies, for those joining and for those leaving, recognizing that there is one body in Christ.

MODERATOR

Brother Scott Moyer led the congregation in prayer.

The item was approved with one abstention.

WORSHIP

The District Worship Team lead congregational singing via video.

WAY FORWARD TEAM

Brother Adam Ulm led the group in prayer. After concluding, he recalled that Pete Kontra spoke about conflict and disagreement in the past. He noted that those of us who remain want to continue to work at this, to come together in conversation. He reviewed the history of the Way Forward process to date, noting that from various meetings and conversations the Team is trying to respond with recommendations of how to move forward as a district, seeking the unity that Christ calls us to. He noted that 12 pages of recommendations were submitted to the District Board in addition to a proposed Way Forward Covenant. He referred the delegates to p.56 of the conference booklet and outlined the eight priorities found in the recommendations submitted. He noted that the board voted to accept the report and adopt the covenant. He invited the congregation to attend the 1:00 p.m. insight session devoted to the recommendations. He noted that the eight priorities and the covenant may be found on the ANE District website and showed the moving video "A Way Forward" thanking Mark Myers for the creation of the video. The Way Forward Team concluded by leading the congregation in a litany. Pete Kontra led the group in prayer.

MODERATOR

Brother Scott Moyer made announcements, gave instructions, and led the congregation in prayer prior to lunch.

**LUNCH BREAK AND
INSIGHT SESSIONS**

The congregation was dismissed for lunch.

MODERATOR

Brother Scott Moyer called the District Conference back into session at 2:00 p.m.

FINANCES

Ray Flagg, Treasurer, reported on the finances of the ANE District as reported on pages 42-47 of the conference book. He spoke to the current financial report, the auditor's financial statement, the 2022 ministry investment plan and concluded by introducing Business Items 7 and 8 (recommended by the District Board).

BUSINESS ITEM #7

The 2022 District Ministry Investment Plan was moved out of committee.

There were no questions.

The item was approved.

BUSINESS ITEM #8

2022 Fair Share Giving Amount was moved out of committee.

There were no questions.

The item was approved

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2022 SLATE

John Hostetter, Moderator-Elect, on behalf of the Gifts Discernment Team, presented the 2022 slate as recorded on pp. 49-54 of the conference book.

MOTION

Scott Moyer, Moderator, moved the affirmation of the 2022 slate, Business Item # 9, as recommended by the District Board.

The 2022 Slate passed with 102 slates returned, 94 affirming the slate and 8 exceptions.

CAMP SWATARA

Tim Courtright, Executive Director, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented the report as recorded on pp. 57-59 of the conference book. In particular, he thanked the many volunteers who make camp happen. He also thanked Bob Biddle for his outstanding service at Camp. He is retiring at the end of December. Tim noted that Dale Ziegler is retiring from the Camp Swatara board at the end of the year, having made a massive impact over many years.

STANDING COMMITTEE

Kim Ream, Alternate Standing Committee member, presented the report via video as recorded on pp. 60-61 of the conference book.

BRETHREN DISASTER RELIEF AUCTION

Tom Fritz, Chair, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented a report on the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction and as recorded on p. 62 of the conference book. He noted that there were a number of relocations and adjustments to the program from previous years including a much smaller brochure with no ads and no Friday night auction in the main hall. He announced that the 2021 auction, including bequests, had raised nearly \$500,000 with few items being donated, but many of them bringing larger amounts than is usual. He noted that last year, even though there was no action due to the pandemic, donations totaled more than \$230,000, of which \$200,000 were distributed in disaster relief. He invited all to attend the 2022 auction to be held on September 23rd and 24th at the Lebanon Expo Center.

YOUTH REPORT

Jason Haldeman and Donna Parcell presented a report via video on Youth Ministries in the ANE District.

COBYS FAMILY SERVICES

Mark Cunningham, Executive Director presented a COBYS report via video, and as recorded on pp. 63-64 of the conference book.

WORSHIP

The District Worship Team lead congregational singing via video.

BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A report was presented on pp. 65-66 of the conference book.

BRETHREN BENEFIT TRUST

A report was presented by **Nevin Dulabaum** via video and on pp. 67-68 of the conference book. Steve Mason also presented in person following the video.

MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD

A report was presented on pp. 69-70 of the conference book.

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ON EARTH PEACE	A report was presented on pp. 71-72 of the conference book.
OFFICE OF PEACEBUILDING POLICY	A report was presented by Nathan Hosler and Galen Fitzkee via video and on p. 73 of the conference book. Brother Hosler noted that the office is staffed by himself, a BVS volunteer, presently Galen, and other volunteers.
SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY MINISTRY CENTER	Donna Rhodes, Executive Director, presented a report via video, and as recorded on pages 74-76 of the conference book.
CLERK'S REPORT	Douglas Nyce, ANE District Clerk , presented the clerk's report. Friday Night Worship Service Attendance: 115 Brethren Disaster Ministries Offering: \$1,372.50 (\$2,504.93 at time of print) Bible Study: 23 District Conference Saturday Morning Session: 185 Delegates: 129 present (86 in person and 43 online) out of 136 registered Total possible delegates: 226 Congregations and Fellowships: 50 present out of 51 registered Represented out of a possible: 71 (NB: this does not include Projects)
QUESTION TIME	Scott Moyer, Moderator , announced that the floor was now open for questions on the reports presented. There were no questions.
MOTION TO ACCEPT	Scott Moyer, Moderator , asked for a motion and a second. A delegate moved to accept Business Item #10, the reports as submitted. This was seconded. The reports were accepted via in person and online voting, as submitted.
MODERATOR	Scott Moyer expressed that he was honored to serve as Moderator over the past year. He asserted that we are to be renewed in Christ daily. He drew attention to the card in each person's packet with the logo and them on it. He asserted that out of brokenness comes growth and noted that God is working for us and through us daily. He concluded by reading from Colossians 3:8.
CONSECRATION AND TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP	Leadership was transferred to the Moderator-Elect, John Hostetter, by Scott Moyer. Brother Moyer led the congregation in prayer over Brother Hostetter. John Hostetter, 2022 Moderator, announced that the ANE District Conference would be held on October 7 th - 8 th , 2022.
CLOSING	John Hostetter, 2022 Moderator , thanked everyone involved in the conference and urged everyone to continue to be the new creation. He noted that we are called to be different, to not call follow the American Jesus, but rather to follow the crucified Jesus of the New Testament, serving each other graciously and showing the name of God to be glorious.

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TIME OF THANKS

Brother Moyer led the congregation in applause in thanks to the ANE District Staff.
The conference closed in song, singing “Bless’d Be the Tie that Binds.”

Respectfully submitted,
D.L. Nyce, Clerk