

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 9:00 a.m. on October 8, 2022, the 53<sup>rd</sup> 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 John Hostetter. He went on to introduce the team. Brother Hostetter then thanked all of those involved in organizing and running the conference, including those behind the scenes, so to speak, including the host church, the Annville CoB. He especially thanked David Steele for his leadership of worship and his message on Friday night.

Noting that it was in response to a question at the District Conference briefing, District Executive Pete Kontra commented about the attitudes that we bring to such a meeting as this. He noted that over the past several weeks he's found what David wrote about in Psalm 51 is so true, that God will not despise a broken and contrite spirit. He encouraged all to have self-awareness of their own brokenness, to offer grace to those who offend you, and to give a break to a person who presents the most boring report ever. He invited everyone to come to the gathering with a deep self-awareness of our own brokenness. He led the gathering in prayer that we may speak and receive life-giving words.

**CONFERENCE OFFICERS**

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

**CONFERENCE PERSONNEL &  
DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF**

Dave Stauffer, Parliamentarian, Pete Kontra, District Executive, Krista Dickson, Office Administrator, Kelly Bernstein, Communications Manager & District Conference Coordinator, Megan Lester, Timekeeper, 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 (noting that Business Item #9 did not require action on our part, so it was removed as a business item and the following items were renumbered accordingly).

**BUSINESS ITEM #1**

Adoption of Revised Agenda

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

**WELCOME**

**Mark Clapper**, Executive Director of College Engagement, welcomed delegates and non-delegates, on behalf of Elizabeth A Rider, President of Elizabethtown College and referred the assembled to the college report found on pp. 9-12 of the conference booklet. He noted that as a member of the class of 1996, he recognized at least one other classmate in attendance in the delegate body, Rev. Liz Bidgood-Enders. He shared that the college had the good fortune of welcoming more than 500 new

students in the fall. He noted that the college encourages students to live good lives and lives of service, emulating the Elizabethtown College motto: Educate for Service. He expressed that the college continues to encourage the use of education to benefit others and that there is a strong sense of service among graduates. He noted that the college continues to develop its existing partnerships with congregations and other organizations sharing in the founding values of the college: peace, service, social justice and dignity for all. He noted that students of all backgrounds are welcomed at E-town and that the college has a special interest in those who identify as Church of the Brethren. He encourage all in attendance to help them look at what the college has to offer.

#### **DISTRICT EXECUTIVE**

**Pete Kontra, District Executive**, thanked the Moderator and all sisters and brothers wherever they may be, wishing everyone a good morning. He asked all of those assembled if they had ever had one of those days that started sideways. He noted that his shower head exploded in his face this morning! He asked everyone to remember that he is human and that we all exist by the grace of our loving God. He asked everyone to take a look at his report on the work of the district to be found on pp. 13-16 of the conference booklet. Brother Kontra stated that he continues to feel called to serve as District Executive and feels blessed to do this work. He expressed that he can be contacted anytime and that his door is always open. He noted that, growing up, his grandparents were caretakers of the church. He noted that he was “invited” to help them clean the church and that he learned at a young age how to use a floor buffer. He noted that he swept all of the stairs of the two-story education wing on his knees. He recalled that his grandpa was always anxious that the hymnals would be set just right in the pews so as to not damage the binding. He expressed that he never thought then that he would be called to serve that congregation as pastor, or to serve as ANE District Executive. He noted another strong memory of love feast. He expressed that his childhood he learned the powerful example of humble service shown to us in our Lord’s example of washing on another’s feet. He noted that his experience at church, starting by cleaning the church, cleaning on his knees, then cleaning on another’s feet in love feast, that we are called to be on our knees, that we must live as Jesus did. He expressed that if we claim to live in him, we must live as Jesus lived. He asked, how did he live. Paul says, in your relationships with one another, you should have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. He expressed that Jesus made himself nothing, that as a man, he humbled himself, even to death on the cross. Brother Kontra asked why should we live like this. His answer was to show our love for God and our relationship to him through Christ and through our love for others. As I have loved you, so you must love on another. Brother Kontra expressed that Christ’s disciples were thinking about how Jesus loved them in their experience with him, loving and teaching, regardless of their own backgrounds, that we as brothers and sisters in Christ of

various backgrounds and life experiences should do the same. He expressed that yes, there is one truth through Jesus Christ. He expressed that we know we allow our differences to create obstacles in our relationships. He expressed that sometimes he does not feel up to the task, good enough, smart enough. He expressed that outside forces, other brothers and sisters are sometimes working against him, but if we claim to live in him...we should be salt and light in the world. He asked that we not allow the constraints of any moment to limit our expression of love. He expressed that our Lord is the source of life and strength and love. He asked how we are working on that here in the district. He listed the Way Forward Ministry, the Shalom Team that is newly formed, nine committed followers of Christ working to bring wholeness in our relationship with each other. He encouraged us to know our neighbors, to build strong relationships. He reminded the body that our district mission statement calls for us to work together, to know our neighbor groups. He expressed that he sees this as an opportunity for members to join together in small groups to build relationships: hiking, motorcycling, golfing, whatever our relationships and interests are. He stated that he is looking for individuals to help lead those groups that that this work will begin in January, with groups starting in April. He stated that there is so much more than you will hear about in just the few minutes today in the work of the district and throughout the district. He concluded by asking the God continue to bless us as His church for His glory and for the good of the world around us.

**DISTRICT BOARD CHAIR  
AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

**Jeff Grossnickle-Batterton, Board Chair**, referred the assembled to the District Board, Directors, and Commissions Reports on pp. 17-41 in the Conference booklet. He introduced himself, noting that he is pastor of the Lititz CoB and is in his first year as ANE District Board Chair. He thanked all delegates, congregations, and district staff for building disciples and congregations. He noted that the newly formed Shalom Team is being introduced as a part of his report. He stated that our district's vision statement reads that we are guided by the New Testament as congregations who covenant and work together to further the kingdom of God. He stated that we have a wide diversity of ways that we actively work in our world, in our neighborhoods. He stated that we may have to find more intentional ways to build relationship, guided by scripture, as Brethren always have been. He reminded the body that Brother Dave Steele in his Friday sermon noted that we all have a vision to strive for, acknowledging that we are not yet there, but that we remain focused on the gospel vision of becoming more Christ-like in our daily lives...building up the body of Christ. He reminded the body that our forebears build community among each other and that we should now tell the story of the CoB in a broken world that so desperately needs our message. He stated that we often fall into the trap of believing that nothing is going to change until Jesus returns. He asserted that we can see the fruits of the spirit in our ministry today, when we

are actively engaged in those ministries. He asserted that our commitment to one another relies on the trust that we have committed to one another. He expressed that it is easy in this time and season to focus only on numbers such as offering, membership and baptisms. He expressed that the Holy Spirit is concerned with our physical well-being, seeing our congregations and the communities around our congregations to flourish. He stated that we continue as we grow together to find new ways to build one another up, brick by brick. He acknowledged that we have faced and continue to face hard decisions such as separations and departures, but we must lift up with joy the meaningful relationships that continue. He noted that the scriptures contain brokenness and heart ache, but also Shalom. He called the Shalom team members up as he noted that we are called to live as a peaceful church, building on our foundation as a Historic Peace Church. Brother Grossnickle-Batterton lamented that we live in a world in which conflict is abundant, but rejoiced that we are also confronted with a different vision for the world that is bound in scripture. He expressed that conflict will continue to exist in the church and the world, but what is important is how we react to and use it as a church, as it may provide a vital spiritual function. He expressed that brokenness can be wasted or it can be a wake up call to strive toward total well-being: shalom. He stated that Shalom is more than a name, that it is healing and wholeness and that people of shalom follow the difficult call to be in a right relationship with themselves and with God. He asserted that the purpose of the Shalom Team is to empower the ANE District to maintain and enhance healthy relationships and to deal with brokenness, offering opportunities for dialog to deal forthrightly with disagreements. He noted that the team would also provide education and receive training, providing district-wide events that focus on such skills and consulting on a short-term basis with congregations. They will also be involved in assessing congregational means and pointing to resources as needed. He noted that members have been invited to participate due to their emotional maturity and non-anxious presences amid conflict. Brother Grossnickle-Batterton led the body in prayer for the success of the Shalom Team. He concluded by asking the body to pause to lament the loss of sister congregations. He noted that what is seen today on the agenda is the final step for some, leaving behind our covenanted relationships with one another. He noted that we acknowledge the pain we incur in such breaks, but, ultimately, we bless these congregations in their own way. He asked the delegate body to please read the reports and respond with any questions. There were no questions about the District Executive and Board Report.

**BUSINESS ITEM #2**

The District Board recommends the disorganization of the Chiques Church of the Brethren.

Jordan Best from the Lititz congregation asked if the intention to disorganize came from within the congregation. Pete Kontra, District Executive, responded that this was correct and that the congregation and ANE District have moved to this point through a two or more year process.

**The item was approved through in person and online voting, with two in person delegates opposed and none opposed online.**

**BUSINESS ITEM #3**

The District Board recommends the disorganization of the Middle Creek Church of the Brethren.

There were no questions.

**The item was approved through in person and online voting with four in person delegates opposed and none opposed online.**

**BUSINESS ITEM #4**

The District Board recommends the disorganization of the White Oak Church of the Brethren.

There were no questions.

**The item was approved through in person and online voting with three in person delegates opposed and none opposed online.**

**BUSINESS ITEM #5**

The District Board recommends the disorganization of the Haitian First Church of the Brethren.

There were no questions.

**The item was approved through in person and online voting with four in person delegates opposed and none opposed online.**

**BUSINESS ITEM #6**

The District Board recommends the disorganization of the Sanford Fellowship.

There were no questions.

**The item was approved through in person and online voting with two delegates opposed in person and none opposed online.**

**BOARD CHAIR**

**Brother Jim Grossnickle-Batterton** led the assembly in prayer for the departing congregations and for the remaining congregations.

- BUSINESS ITEM #7** The District Board recommends the realignment of ANE Sections into ANE East and ANE West as outlined on p. 21 of the conference booklet.
- QUESTION AND MOTION TO AMEND** **Sister Ruby Bean** of the Conewago CoB asked if naming them East and West might not make sense given the geographic location of some of the congregations listed. She suggested the names be simply Section 1 and Section 2 or that perhaps we don't actually need sections at all. She noted the sections aren't really by geography and that she is not seeing a really good rationale for the sections that are here. She pointed out that West Green Tree is about as far west as possible, but is still included in the east section. She moved to amend the original motion so that sections be eliminated and that the Gifts Discernment (GD) Team simply take nominations from the entire district in the future.
- BOARD CHAIR** **Brother Grossnickle-Batterton** noted that the board had considered this suggestion, but that one of the prime concerns was that even though we might be looking at a broader pool, we symbolically would be asking the GD Team to consider geography in its decision making. He noted that in general the sections are divided west and east, but that he is open to naming them sections 1 and 2. He noted that the Moderator anticipates tremendous growth in the next 10 years and looks forward to returning to more sections.
- WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION NEW MOTION TO AMEND** **Sister Ruby Bean** withdrew her motion to amend and moved an amendment that the sections be named Sections 1 and 2. This motion to amend was seconded by a delegate on the floor.
- QUESTION** **An unidentified sister of the Indian Creek CoB** asked if the Sanford Fellowship should now be taken off the list, since it was just disorganized.
- BOARD CHAIR** **The Chair** responded that it would now be removed.
- QUESTION** **Sister Carolyn Beckwith** of the Elizabethtown CoB noted that on p. 14 under congregational withdrawals that there are still five congregations listed as in the withdrawal process. She asked why Heidelberg is on the list of East and West, but the others are not on the list.
- BOARD CHAIR** **The Chair** responded that it was the intention of the Board to not dismiss anyone.
- QUESTION** **Brother Enten Eller** of the Ambler CoB spoke to the motion on the floor. He noted that if you're seeking geographical diversity, it makes sense to keep the names East and West. He asserted that it is nice having an identity such as East or West.

**The amendment to failed with 30 in person delegates in favor and 34 in person delegates opposed and with four online delegates in favor and seven online delegates opposed.**

**The original item passed unanimously through in person and online voting.**

**BUSINESS ITEM #8**

The District Board moved the ANE Bylaw Changes as found on p. 22 of the conference booklet.

**The item passed unanimously through in person and online voting.**

**ANE MINISTRIES AND STORY**

The report was presented by Sister Liz Bidgood Enders and on pp. 22-28 of the conference book.

**WAY FORWARD TEAM**

The report was presented by Sister Belita Mitchell of the Harrisburg First CoB and on pp. 35-36 of the conference booklet.

**MODERATOR**

Instructions and announcements were made by the moderator. He noted that baskets for offering are located in the lobby benefiting Alpha and Omega Community Center in Lancaster.

**LUNCH BREAK AND INSIGHT SESSIONS**

The congregation was dismissed for lunch.

**MODERATOR**

**Brother John Hostetter** called the District Conference back into session at 2:00 p.m. following a time of singing and worship.

**FINANCES**

**Brother Ray Flagg, Treasurer,** reported on the finances of the ANE District as reported on pp. 37-46 of the of the conference book. He spoke to the current financial report, the auditor's financial statement, the 2023 Ministry Investment Plan and concluded by introducing Business Items 9 and 10 (recommended by the District Board).

**BUSINESS ITEM #9**

**The 2023 District Ministry Investment Plan** was moved by the District Board.

**QUESTION**

**Brother Jordan Best** of the Lititz CoB asked if video streaming could be part of the regular budget eventually, instead of being funded separately, as in the coming year, from the sale of the Cocalico property.

**TREASURER**

**Brother Ray Flagg** responded that the position would be reevaluated in the coming two years, but that it is short-term presently.

**The item was approved unanimously through in person and online voting.**

- BUSINESS ITEM #10**                      **2023 Fair Share Giving Amount of \$55 per member** was moved by the District Board.
- AMENDMENT**                              **Brother Enten Eller** of the Amber CoB moved to amend the amount to \$65 as a fair share amount and \$75 as a challenge amount.
- SECOND**                                      **Sister Carolyn Beckwith** of the Elizabethtown CoB seconded the motion to amend.
- TREASURER**                                **Brother Flagg** commented on the rationale for the \$55 amount, that if everyone supports the \$55 fair share that there would be no deficit.
- The amendment failed with one in favor in person and one in favor online, all others being opposed.**
- The original motion passed with two opposed in person and one opposed online, all other being in favor.**
- TIME FOR QUESTIONS**                      **Pete Kontra, ANE District Executive, John Hostetter, ANE Moderator, and David Steele, General Secretary of the Denomination,** fielded a variety of questions from the body in an informal format. Questions included how the membership may be praying for and supporting the leadership and ministry of the district and the denomination in the coming year. Another question was what the hopes of leadership were for the ANE District in the coming year. A third question was how we are working at calling ministers, noting that we seem really short-handed and not doing a good job of it. A fourth question was how are new congregations and fellowships being supported.
- 2023 SLATE**                                      **Sister Audrey Estep**, Chair of the Gifts Discernment Team, presented the 2023 slate as recorded on pp. 47-53 of the conference book. She thanked every member of the GD Team for their help in completing the slate. She noted that many members have been walking around helping today. She asked that they be thanked and that the members of the Annville CoB be thanked for walking around alongside of us.
- MOTION**                                        **The District Board** recommended the affirmation of the 2023 slate, Business Item # 9.
- MODERATOR-ELECT**                        **Dave Nichols**, Moderator-Elect, led the congregation in prayer.
- The 2023 Slate was affirmed with 101 slates returned, 100 affirming the slate and 5 exceptions.**
- CAMP SWATARA**                              **Tim Courtright, Executive Director**, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented the report as recorded on pp. 54-61 of the conference book.



He noted that the Camp Board has been restructured into six voting members and two ex officio members, with voting members linked to councils.

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

**Sister Jennifer West, Standing Committee Member**, presented the report as recorded on p. 62 of the conference book. She asked that the body consider the leaders among you, about who would represent us well on Standing Committee.

**BRETHREN DISASTER  
RELIEF AUCTION**

**Brother Tom Fritz, Chair**, on behalf of the Board of Directors, presented a report on the Brethren Disaster Relief (BDR) Auction and as recorded on p. 63 of the conference book. He noted that there were \$255,682 in direct contributions this year including bequests and other gifts. He reported that food sales amounted to \$52,258, 93 quilts brought \$27,830, 103 theme baskets brought \$13,535, the heifer action brought \$75,000, the Mechanic Grove Golf Tournament brought \$13,500, the coin auction brought in \$7,978 with a total to date of approximately \$483,000 raised for BDR. He noted a distribution was made of \$170,000 this year to the BdM emergency disaster fund and that there will be a \$235,000 distribution to come. He expressed gratitude that the auction seems on target to raise as much as was raised last year. He thanked all of the people who make the auction function, the committees, volunteers, purchasers, donors, et al. He noted that the brochure that was adopted during the pandemic will continue to be the format published in the future, relying on the website and Facebook more heavily.

**COBYS FAMILY SERVICES**

**Brother Mark Cunningham, Executive Director** presented a COBYS report via video, and as recorded on pp. 64-65 of the conference book. He noted the passing of the founder, Glen Faus, on this past Tuesday. He shared things that he know to be true including the fact that tens of thousands of children have been touched thanks to Glen's wisdom and insight. He stated that because of the love of Jesus, Glen is having a much better day today than he had last Saturday.

**TIME OF QUESTIONS**

There were no questions about the reports.

**BETHANY THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY**

**Jeff Carter**, President, presented the report found on pp. 66-68 of the conference book. He showed a video, noting that he was called to the Associate Pastorate of Florin 29 years ago. He stated that Bethany is growing and is very affordable at \$1,100 per semester, with some students paying nothing due to the Pillars and Pathways program offering them housing and employment while studying.

- EDER FINANCIAL**                      **Steven Mason**, Director, presented a video and the report on pp. 69-70 of the conference book. He noted the transition from the name Brethren Benefit Trust to Eder Financial in the past year, named for the Eder River in which the first Brethren baptisms took place.
- WORSHIP**                                The District Worship Team led the congregation in song: How Great is Our God!
- MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD**                      **Brother David Steele**, General Secretary, present the report as found on pp. 71-72 of the conference booklet. He recommended the reading of the new book “Hoosier Prophet” about Dan West. He thanked Josiah Ludwick and Joel Peña from ANE for serving on the board. He asked how the church perseveres when so many are unclear, showing the video “We walk by faith.”
- SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY MINISTRY CENTER**                      **Sister Donna Rhodes, Executive Director**, presented a report via video, and as recorded on pages 73-75 of the conference book.
- MODERATOR**                              **Brother John Hostetter, Moderator**, reminded the congregation that 2023 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Germantown CoB. He suggested that there are many events planned. He encouraged all to participate and to visit the Young Center in the coming year.
- CLERK’S REPORT**                      **Brother Douglas Nyce, ANE District Clerk**, presented the clerk’s report.  
Friday Night Worship Service Attendance: 128  
Brethren Disaster Ministries Offering: \$1,831.83  
Bible Study: 20  
District Conference Saturday Morning Session: 216  
District Conference Saturday Afternoon Session: 188  
Delegates: 122 present (106 in person and 16 online) out of 120 registered  
Total possible delegates: 208  
Congregations and Fellowships: 43 present out of 44 registered  
Represented out of a possible: 69 (NB: this does not include Projects)
- QUESTION TIME**                      **John Hostetter, Moderator**, announced that the floor was now open for questions on the reports presented.  
  
**There were no questions.**
- MOTION TO ACCEPT**                      **John Hostetter, Moderator**, asked for a motion and a second for action on all reports. A delegate moved to accept Business Item #12, the reports as submitted. This was seconded.  
  
**The reports were accepted unanimously via in person and online voting, as submitted.**

**MODERATOR**

**John Hostetter** encouraged all to thoroughly complete the evaluations for the sake of the Program and Arrangements Committee. He also thanked them and the members of the Gifts Discernment Team. He thanked the Ephrata CoB for hosting worship Friday. He also thanked Elizabethtown College and the Annville CoB for hosting the conference. He thanked Janet Myers who labored tirelessly to organize music for worship. He noted that she has received a call that has taken her out of the district, but she has completed her work here. He also thanked Kelly Bernstein for being such a patient and gracious person amidst her own life challenges. He noted that we are all deeply grateful to her.

**CONSECRATION AND  
TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP**

Leadership was transferred to the Moderator-Elect, Dave Nichols, by John Hostetter. Brother Hostetter noted David's passion and devotion to the district. He noted that he has discovered that David is a thinker, full of creative ideas and approachable. He asked that we all uphold him our prayers. He stated that he releases his calling and places it upon David's shoulders. He stated that he wants to see how God will work through David this year. He expressed hope that the gavel may always be bathed in the waters of civility. John Hostetter led the congregation in prayer over Brother Nichols.

**CLOSING**

**David Nichols, 2023 Moderator**, thanked John for his gracious words.

**WORSHIP**

The conference closed in *a capella* singing of "Move in Our Midst." The conference concluded at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
D.L. Nyce, Clerk