

## ACC Spring Assembly Celebration Summary Highlights

### *Discerning Together: The Church Listening for the Spirit*

April 20, 2013 – Conestoga Mennonite Church

#### I. GATHERING

- A. **Acts 15 Participatory Meditation:** Jane Hooper Peifer (Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Pastor) facilitated scriptural meditation.
- B. **Pastoral Reflection:** Bob Petersheim, Conestoga MC Pastor offered a reflection based on Romans 15:7-13, highlighting verses 7 and 13:
  - We read the same scripture but hear different themes.
  - What would it mean today to do this hard work from a foundation overflowing with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit?
  - It may well be that without compromising truth; the Holy Spirit may want us to also not compromise grace.
  - Bob invited the delegates to reach for discernment that would bring praise to God.
- C. **Worship:** Conestoga Mennonite Church Team led the gathered body in a time of singing.

#### II. BUSINESS SESSION

- A. **Year-to-Date budget report and affirmation of July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 Budget**  
Proposal: Ken Herr (Finance and Stewardship Committee Chair)
  - **The delegates approved the budget proposal.**
- B. **Matching Fund:** Harry Jarrett (ACC Moderator and Neffsville Mennonite Church Pastor) explained a new matching fund that has been created to increase the stability and sustainability of ACC's ministry going into the future. The goal is to raise \$20,000 from individuals and business owners which would be matched up to \$20,000 by increased congregational giving above the amount now stated in the July 2013-June 2014 budget for each congregation.
- C. **Annual Report:** Keith Wilson (Conference Coordinator) introduced the 2012 Annual Report booklet.
- D. **Moderator Announcement:** Jon Carlson (Executive Committee member and pastor at Oley Valley Mennonite Church) announced that Harry Jarrett would be stepping down as pastor of Neffsville Mennonite and from his role as moderator as well in order to move to Harrisonburg, VA.
- E. **Nickels for Neighbors:** Bob Murr (chair of Missions Committee and pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church) announced the two grant recipients for the 2013 Nickels For Neighbors funds: Great Joy Mennonite Church Vacation Bible School and the Exit Lancaster program.
- F. **Peace and Justice Committee Summer Reading Program:** Julie Sommers (Peace and Justice Committee member) introduced and explained the PJC's peace and justice bibliography and summer reading program to be used by ACC churches.
- G. **CRM (Conference Related Ministry) Resolution:** Edgar Stoesz (CRM Council Chair and former ACC Moderator) introduced and explained a document he drafted with suggestions which affirm and strengthen the conference connections to and support of recognized CRMs. The resolution passed.
- H. **Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC):** John Weber (GDC chair and former ACC moderator) are seeking nominations for various conference leadership and committee positions.
- I. **Offering:** Del Seitz (ACC Treasurer) called for an offering and said a prayer.

### III. REVIEW OF SPRING DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Delegates gathering around tables, while non-delegates sat at other designated tables. Executive Committee Members and Warren Tyson read a prepared statement reviewing the process leading up to the present.

### IV. TABLE DISCUSSION

Marcus Smucker lead a discussion process, posing the question to table groups: "do you agree with voting on associate membership, or should we vote on something else?" After conversation the table facilitators shared their findings.

### V. AFTERNOON SESSION PART ONE

- A. The meeting resumed with the Acts 15 liturgical reading and refrain again. Moderator Harry Jarrett stated that the poll before lunch seemed to indicate that 78% of delegates gathered here affirm a readiness to vote on Associate Membership.
- B. Table discussion was invited around this question: "What do you think needs to be considered in this decision?"

### VI. RESPONSE FROM FRAZER MENNONITE REPRESENTATIVES

After a break, Brenda Martin Hurst (Frazer Mennonite Church, Pastor) and lay leaders from Frazer MC came forward to respond, as several requests had been made to hear their reflection on the developing delegate resolution. She expressed that they had heard the delegates' care and concern and recognized having put them in a difficult position, that they respect the decision, however have concerns. In the end the whole congregation will discern how to respond.

### VII. DELEGATE VOTE PROCESS

- A. Harry motioned that, "Atlantic Coast Conference Delegates invite Frazer Mennonite Church to become an Associate Member congregation of ACC. Over the next eighteen months, we will continue to engage in dialogue and discernment, trusting that God's Spirit will lead and guide us. We request that delegates at the Fall Assembly in 2014 review Frazer's membership status." There was a 2<sup>nd</sup>, followed by an amendment to the resolution (reflected in the final version below)
- B. There was discussion about the theological and Biblical implications of the resolution and issues at hand.
- C. After a moment of silence and prayer, Harry called for the question, noting that the printed ballot does not have the amended portion which was just added – delegates are asked to write in that sentence causing the final resolution to read:  
**"Atlantic Coast Conference Delegates invite Frazer Mennonite Church to become an Associate Member congregation of ACC, inviting Frazer's already credentialed ministers to pursue credentialing in ACC. Over the next eighteen months, we will continue to engage in dialogue and discernment, trusting that God's spirit will lead and guide us. We request that delegates at the Fall Assembly in 2014 review Frazer's membership status."**
- D. The gathered body sang hymns while the votes were tallied. **93 delegates voted – 29 voted no, and 64 voted yes. This represents a 68.8% affirmation vote to extend associate membership to Frazer Mennonite Church. This is greater than 66.6% needed so the motion is carried.**

#### VIII. CLOSING AND SENDING

Marcus remarked that it is always true in times like this, a little less than 1/3 of the people feel pain. We need to recognize this, and care for these people, pray for each other. The gathering was closed with several more a-capella hymns.

*Recorder: Keith Wilson, conference coordinator*