

2016 Annual Assembly Minutes

Ridgeview Mennonite Church
October 22, 2016



Present: 154 participants, including 84 delegates, 64 general attendees, and 6 staff members

Welcome & Worship

1. John Denlinger opened with a welcome to those gathered including visiting guests and led in opening prayer.
2. Mick Sommers read from Luke 12:22-34. This was Jesus' response to a young man wanting Jesus to settle a dispute between he and his brother. Mick named that we all have our fears and phobias and they change and evolve over time. Jesus never seemed to shy away from naming fearful aspects of life. Jesus told his disciples not to have fear, in turn preparing his disciples for the coming troubles. Disciples needed to find security and strength in Jesus as they were going through persecution. As our fears mount, our world grows smaller and we become obsessed with what affects us. Jesus encourages his past and present disciples to expand our perspective and look around at what God has provided. We as Christians are not exempt from fear so fear and faith exist together. We are called not to be afraid, nor governed and paralyzed by fear. Following Jesus and understanding this passage matter because when we choose to follow Jesus we choose to gain a new perspective, empowering us to be the Church. Perhaps we can never be free of fear, but we can be people who have conquered those fears or in the process of conquering those fears.
3. Worship led by Ridgeview team: STS #39 Will you Come and Follow Me, #49 I will come to you in the silence, #114 God Has Chosen Me
4. Offering was taken as HWB #327 Great is thy faithfulness was sung
5. Brook and Lyn gave out prizes to youth delegates in attendance and Lyn mentioned the need for Youth on Youth committee and the ongoing invitation for churches to nominate youth delegates.

Conference Business

6. Sylvia Shirk shared about releasing Immanuel Mennonite Comm. Church and shared the background of this release. She invited us to be in prayer for them as they seek potential alternative connections and for their ministry as they spread the Word of God. Sylvia found Immanuel's church candle and reported that she would take that candle back to them as a way to recognize their light and bless them. Sylvia led in prayer.

- a. ACTION I: Motion to receive Immanuel’s withdrawal as a member congregation of Atlantic Coast Conference, John Denlinger (Ridgeview), second by Ken Herr (Zion). Nearly unanimous agreement.**

- 7. John Denlinger introduced members of Executive Committee, which is recommending membership to four congregations. He gave some background regarding Lancaster Mennonite Conference’s decision to leave MC USA and those congregations that have processed and discerned to remain connected to Mennonite Church USA through membership ACC.
 - a. Church Presentations:
 - i. East Chestnut St. Mennonite (Todd Friesen)
 - ii. New Holland Mennonite Church (Dawn Ranck Hower)
 - iii. North Bronx Mennonite Church (Ruth Yoder Wenger)
 - iv. Pilgrim’s Mennonite Church (Rebecca Pereverzoff, John Williamson, Carl Shenk)

 - b. Questions of Clarification: John read over the ballot and asked for questions. None asked. John led in prayer before the vote was collected.

- 8. Reporting of Vote Results: John reported that the vote was nearly unanimous in favor of accepting East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, New Holland Mennonite Church, North Bronx Mennonite Church, and Pilgrims Mennonite Church as new members of Atlantic Coast Conference.**
 - a. John, along with ACC staff members, read through a litany to celebrate the newly welcomed congregations. Each congregation was given a candle to light to add to the others on display representing all ACC congregations.

- 9. New Minister Introductions: Dick Thomas (Ridgeview) felt encouraged about this morning and the new congregations joining ACC along with their numerous credentialed leaders. He is excited to see there are 11 women and 8 men being added to ACC as credentialed ministers. Dick read through the list of new ministers.

- 10. Nickels for Neighbors: Sam Wanjau (African Community Church of Lancaster) and Sylvia Shirk (Manhattan) presented the Nickels for Neighbors offering. After Sam’s introduction of her and the program, Sylvia spoke about the history and her involvement in the New York Mennonite Immigration Program, which helps immigrant families in need. Nickels for Neighbors is the first fundraising effort for this program.

- 11. Peace Mug Presentation: Vontetta Storbakken (Radical Living) read a Dorothy Day quote about hospitality before presenting the Peace & Justice Committee’s 2016 Peace Mug to Norma Stauffer (Forest Hills). She led the organizing of a refugee family who moved to Lancaster in the past year.

12. Report on Conference Transitions: John shared that there is always something to be done at the conference office. John introduced all staff at ACC. Merv Stoltzfus, ACC Executive Conference Minister, updated delegates on other congregations seeking affiliation with ACC. The process is actively ongoing. He invited delegates to pray for those who are continuing to discern affiliation.
13. Nancy Kauffman, denominational minister with Mennonite Church USA, thanked ACC for making a home for new congregations and shared her excitement to see how God will work among us. She urged delegates to remember that these congregations sought ACC out because they saw something in the conference and encouraged all to remain faithful to the conference's identity so that others may come and join. She mentioned that she texted Ervin Stutzman about the nearly unanimous decision to have those churches join and it is a blessing and encouragement for the Mennonite Church. She highlighted the Convention in Orlando and recommends learning more about it because it will be different. She also mentioned that ACC leadership is highly respected across the Mennonite Church which is quite significant. Nancy concluded with a blessing.
14. Spring 2016 minutes and 2016 Annual Report: John asked if there were questions about the minutes or annual report. None stated.
 - a. **ACTION II: Motion to receive the 2016 Spring Assembly by John Denlinger, second by John Weber. Unanimously approved.**
 - b. **ACTION III: Motion to receive the 2016 Annual Report by John Denlinger, second by Nathan Horst (Ridgeview). Unanimously approved**
15. Finance Report: Ken Martin (Forest Hills), Executive Committee Treasurer, reminded us of the fiscal year which is July – June. Last year we were close to reaching the Finance & Stewardship Committee's goal of a balanced budget. We were \$1,800 short, which is fairly small, but still would like to close that gap. A concern is that ACC does not have large reserves set aside, so we depend heavily on congregational support. Ken asked for questions. None were asked.
 - a. **ACTION IV: Motion to receive the 2016 Finance Report by Ken Martin, second by Brenda Martin Hurst (Frazer). All affirmed.**
16. Vote on Leadership Slate: John Weber (Akron), Chair of the Gifts Discernment Committee, presented the following leaders for affirmation and asked that delegates would vote by turning in paper ballots: All were affirmed by a margin of 90% or greater.
 - a. Jon Carlson (Forest Hills) – Executive Committee Assistant Moderator
 - b. Kevin Ressler (Community) – Executive Committee Member at Large
 - c. Brenda Martin Hurst (Frazer) – Executive Committee Member at Large
 - d. Larry McJunkin (Forest Hills) – Finance & Stewardship Committee Chair
 - e. Larry Massanari (Frazer) – Gifts Discernment Committee

f. Julia Dunst (Zion) – Gifts Discernment Committee

Afternoon Program

17. Table Conversations: After Lunch, Joanne Dietzel (Ridgeview) and Mick Sommers (Ridgeview) led table discussions on the day's theme. Table groups were encouraged to share with one another about:
- a. Fears
 - i. How does fear work in your life?
 - ii. What are the differences between fear and anxiety?
 - iii. What are the fears that are deep for you?
 - b. Family
 - i. How can or does family aid/help or heighten our fears/anxiety?
 - ii. Who in the family do we go to when we have fears and anxiety?
 - iii. Who in the family heightens fears/anxiety?
 - c. Faith
 - i. How does faith remove or not remove fears/anxiety?
 - ii. How do we apply faith to fears and family?
18. Time of sharing from Conference Related Ministries (CRMs): Cindy Petershiem (Conestoga), ACC CRM Coordinator, led a time of sharing by three CRM leaders: Jordan Kauffman of New Person Ministries, Ken Bontrager of Camp Deerpark, and Nelson Okanya from Eastern Mennonite Missions. Each of them were asked to share:
- a. What is your ministry?
 - b. What does it mean for your ministry to live faithfully? In what ways would this call be fulfilled?
 - c. What obstacles or fears does your ministry overcome to live faithfully?
 - d. In what ways does being part of a family, a community of faith, help your ministry overcome that fear in order to live faithfully?
19. Response/Closing: members of the ACC Staff led a closing litany:

We are determined
to live in faith, without fear,
to act with courage and
to take risks as we work for peace and reconciliation.

We are committed to reach out with the compassion of Christ, to embrace each other, our congregations, our communities, and the world with God's love.

We stand together
with each other:
centered in Christ,
building connections,
and sharing God's love.