

Spring Assembly Celebration

Virtual Delegate Session \ \ \ April 17, 2021

Minutes

Present: 92 participants, including at least 55 delegates representing up to 29 member congregations.

The Spring Delegate Session was conducted online through a live video conference and electronic voting form which was available following the session. Documents and action items were sent to delegates 30-days in advance.

9:00 am Session:

1. **Welcome:** Cindy Petersheim (moderator, Conestoga) provided a welcome to ACC's first ever delegate meeting via Zoom. She shared some reminders and suggestions about the mechanics of the meeting. Cindy highlighted the lead article in the Spring 2021 issue of Currents titled "Us and Them". She encouraged us to become people of peace. She also gave a reminder about the online voting form to be completed by delegates after the session.
2. **Nickels for Neighbors project announcement:** Bruce Campbell-Janz (Missions Committee chair, East Chestnut Street) announced that the 2021 Nickels for Neighbors grant would be given to the New York Mennonite Immigration Program for their efforts to expand their services to a larger number of families. Bruce shared a promotional video from NYMIP and invited congregations to begin collecting funds to share at the 2021 Fall Assembly.
3. **Receive Fall 2020 Minutes:** Cindy Petersheim presented the minutes from the 2020 Fall Assembly, including action items. **These were approved as presented by electronic vote.**
4. **Congregational Leadership Fund (CLF) Update:** Merv Stoltzfus (executive conference minister, Ridgeview) reviewed the purpose of the CLF and shared that the balance is currently above \$307,000.
5. **Year-to-date Budget Update & 2021-2022 Budget Presentation:** Rod Yoder (Finance Committee chair, East Chestnut Street) shared the financial update:
 - a. He highlighted the Paycheck Protection Program loan that we received in the amount of \$27,400 which should be forgiven in its entirety.
 - b. Rod also highlighted some revisions that the Finance Committee was given the liberty to make to the 2020-2021 budget after it was approved in April 2020.
 - c. He shared his gratitude for the surplus of congregational giving and total income. These, along with decreased expenses resulted in a net surplus for the fiscal year.
 - d. Rod presented the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget which showed a \$12,900 deficit.

- e. Keith Miller (Conestoga) asked Rod about a line item referencing trauma. Merv Stoltzfus explained that a program to help pastors build trauma resilience during the challenges of 2020-2021.
 - f. Rod shared the Finance Committee's recommendation that delegates approve the 2021-2022 preliminary budget as presented and give the Executive and Finance Committees the authority to adjust income and expenses as needed after the close of the 2020-2021 fiscal year. **The 2021-2022 preliminary budget was approved as presented.**
6. **2021 Leadership Solicitation:** Lyndell Theissen (Gifts Discernment Committee Chair, Blossom Hill) invited delegates to submit names to fill six upcoming openings through the online delegate ballot. Open positions include Assistant Moderator, Executive Committee Member at Large, Peace & Justice Committee Chair, MLC Chair, and two Gifts Discernment Committee members.
 7. **Brooklyn Peace Center (BPC) Update:** Vonetta and Jason Storbakken (Manhattan) shared a variety of updates on the developing BPC and the member ministries housed at 23 Marcus Garvey Blvd in Brooklyn. Making the building accessible to those with disabilities and other updates to the space are a current priority, so they invited delegates to pray for and financially support the development of the Center.
 8. **Introduction to Grace & Peace Mennonite Church & Vote on Extending Conference Membership:** Ruth Yoder Wenger (conference minister for New York City, North Bronx) introduced the congregation and three of its leaders who joined the session, Anita Castle, Rhonda Mitchell, and Naomi Yoder. Anita, Rhonda, and Naomi shared about the congregation's rhythms, priorities, leadership structure, and desire to join Atlantic Coast Conference. Cindy shared Executive Committee's excitement to recommend Grace and Peace as a member congregation. She then asked for a show of hands to affirm the newest member congregation. Merv Stoltzfus then asked all delegates to turn mics on to give an audible welcome and applause to Grace and Peace.
 9. **Introduction of New York Mennonite Immigration Program as a New Conference Related Ministry (CRM):** George Stoltzfus (CRM coordinator, Landisville) interviewed Maria Aponte, Carmen Gomez, and Hyacinth Stevens, staff members with NYMIP. They gave an overview of the program's work, its greatest current challenges, and how its values fit with the priorities of Atlantic Coast Conference. George noted that ACC sees CRMs as an extension of our congregation and asked how we can support NYMIP. They shared that we can pray, advocate and donate to support the program.
 10. **Closing:** Cindy Petersheim dismissed the session for an intermission before the 11:00 am session.

11:00 a.m. Session:

11. **Anti-racism Conversations:** Following a lunch break, the virtual session continued with the ACC Anti-racism Task Group leading conversation on the first chapter of Daniel Hill's book, *White Awake: An honest look at what it means to be white*. Amy Yoder McGloughlin (Frazer) provided instructions to the group before splitting participants into groups of 3-6 members. Individuals in small groups were asked to share a response to one of the following questions:
 - a. Daniel told his friend at the wedding that as a white person, he wished he had a culture too. His friend responded by saying, "White culture is very real. In fact, when white

culture comes in contact with other cultures, it almost always wins." How do you feel when you hear that response? What do you suppose this friend was trying to suggest when he said this?

- b. Do you have any resistance to the idea that "white" is a primary cultural identity in the United States? "Why or why not?"
- c. What elements do you associate with white culture in America? What elements of white culture are obvious to most people? What elements are not?

Small groups met for 25 minutes before being recalled for a time of debriefing and Q&A with planners about replicating the process in congregations.

- 12. Ron Adams (Anti-racism Task Group chair, Landisville) shared a closing and sending prayer.

Recorder, Brook Musselman