

2024 Annual Assembly

Ridgeview Mennonite Church || March 16, 2024

Minutes

Present: 108 participants (both in-person and by video), including 60 delegates representing 20 member congregations

9:00 am Session:

1. **Welcome:** Moderator Gina Burkhart (Landisville) opened with a welcome and introduction to the online delegate voting. She led a time of silence and prayer for those affected by the death of Ashton Clatterbuck from Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster. She invited table group members to introduce themselves and share hopeful reflections with one another.
2. **Worship:** Nathan Horst and company (Ridgeview) led a time of worship
 - a. Mountain of God
 - b. Build Your Kingdom Here
 - c. My Soul Cries Out
3. **MC USA & ACC Updates:** Rachel Ringenberg Miller (MC USA denominational minister for ministerial leadership) and Gina Burkhart shared updates:
 - a. Rachel shared about a variety of new programs and events provided by various MC USA departments and affiliates. She also shared a message about God always creating new life and ways to flourish, even when we can't see it happening. MC USA is in a stage of discerning what new thing is springing forth.
 - b. Gina shared several updates from Atlantic Coast Conference. She shared about the departure of six congregations over the past year. Last Assembly it was announced that Hope Community and Oley Valley departed the conference. Since then we saw the departure of Conestoga, Ark Bible, Neffsville, and Zion. Gina shared about the changes to the conference, both in identity and in size/budget.
 - c. A time of Q&A was offered with Rachel and Joanne Dietzel (Executive Conference Minister, Ridgeview). No questions were asked.
4. **Budget Presentation:** Rod Yoder (Finance Committee chair) shared a financial update.
 - a. **YTD budget update:** Rod shared that expenses and income are comparable to last year at this time. Cash reserves are high to absorb some of the decrease in giving.
 - b. **2024-2025 Budget Presentation:** Rod shared that we expect \$68,000 less in contributions which will be offset by a reduction in budgeted spending, particularly in staff time. The proposed budget has a \$4,000 deficit.

- c. **By electronic ballot, delegates received the YTD budget report and approved the 2024-2025 Preliminary Budget, which will be finalized once the 2025 MC USA salary guidelines are released.**
5. **Missions Committee Updates:**
- a. **Nickels for Neighbors 2023 thank you video:** a video from Roots: Anabaptist kids was shown as a thank you to the conference for the 2023 grant. The grant helped with curriculum development for the kids program and to purchase supplies. Bruce Campbell Janz (Missions Committee Chair, East Chestnut Street) shared nearly \$3,400 was raised for Roots.
 - b. **2024 Nickels for Neighbors presentation:** Bruce Campbell Janz (Missions Committee chair, East Chestnut Street) shared that Bridge of Hope – National has been selected to receive the 2024 grant.
 - c. Bruce presented a proposal that would merge the work of the Missions and Peace & Justice Committee under the umbrella of the latter, primarily due to the overlap in the current work of each. **The merger of these committees was approved by electronic vote.**
6. **New Minister Introductions:** Dawn Ranck-Hower presented the newly credentialed ministers of the past year: Elisa Parmer (Associate Pastor, East Chestnut Street), Angie Chelton (Pastor, Pilgrims), Jonathan Landis (Minister of Music & Worship, James Street), Anna Ressler (Pastor, Hebron). Dawn also introduced Arthur Steward (Pastor, North Baltimore) who was not introduced last year. Dawn led a prayer for the new ministries of these individuals.
7. **2024 Leadership Slate Presentation:** Michael Charles (Gifts Discernment Committee Chair, Rossmere) introduced those being recommended by the Gifts Discernment Committee for conference leadership roles.
- a. The full slate was approved by majority vote:
 - i. Gina Burkhart, moderator
 - ii. Leslie Homer-Cattell, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - iii. Miriam Cruz, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - iv. Rod Yoder, Executive Committee Treasurer
 - v. Jessica Buckwalter, Gifts Discernment Committee member
 - vi. Jeremiah Denlinger, Gifts Discernment Committee member
 - b. Terms for new committee members will begin with the fiscal year on July 1. All nominees were affirmed by electronic ballot.
8. **Receive 2023 Assembly Minutes:** Gina presented the minutes from the 2023 Assembly, including action items. **These were approved by electronic ballot.**

11:00 a.m. Session:

- 9. **Drama that Honors Our Stories & Relations/Callings:** River Crossing Playback Theater led a time of improvisational theater on the theme, Living the Change. With input from the audience, they acted and led discussion on how individuals and churches feel and navigate change, both internally and as a community. During a time of table group sharing, tables named a theme that they heard emerge through the theater presentation and these were discussed as a large group in

closing. Themes noted on managing change, or, *Going forward we will keep in mind*: active presence, intentional belonging, honor stories, sit with discomfort, listen to understand, listen without judgement.

10. **Closing:** Ruth Yoder Wenger (Associate Conference Minister, North Bronx) and Mick Sommers (Associate Conference Minister, Ridgeview) shared a closing blessing to end the session, which was followed by brunch and dismissal.

Recorder, Brook Musselman