

Southern Ohio District Conference
October 10, 2014
Happy Corner Church of the Brethren

Friday, October 10, 2014

Moderator Tom Bowser called us to order at 6:30 pm. Pastor Trent Smith, Happy Corner, welcomed us to Happy Corner.

NOTE: All reports were on the District website: www.sodcob.org

Seating of delegates and consecration: Moderator-elect Mark Bowman led the Consecration of Delegates

Adoption of the Agenda: Moderator Bowser presented the agenda for adoption. It was approved.

Review of District Conference Minutes: The minutes for the District Conference held on October 11-12, 2013 were approved.

Affirmation of District Leadership Slate: Julie Hostetter presented the slate. Slates were distributed. Sister Hostetter led the group in prayer. The slates were returned.

Action Item: Change to the District Code of Regulations (required 2/3 majority): Julie Hostetter introduced the changes recommended by the Program and Arrangements Team.

1. Change 1

1.1. From the Code of Regulations: "This commission shall also make all appointments to commissions of persons who are not board members and shall make all committee appointments and appointments to various outside organizations who have Brethren representation."

1.2. Proposed change: "This commission shall serve in a consultant role to Board commissions on an as-needed-basis for appointments of persons who are not Board members and for committee appointments. The Gifts Discernment Commission may be consulted for appointments to various outside organizations who have District representation."

2. Change 2

2.1. From the Code of Regulations: "This commission shall consider not only the current needs of the District but also the needs of the District in five and ten years."

2.2. Proposed change: "This commission shall consider the current and future needs of the District."

3. Moderator Bowser opened the floor for questions. It was noted that the version available online was different from the one in the delegate packet. Julie clarified that the online version was the most recent.

4. A vote was taken to approve the Program and Arrangements recommendation. The changes were approved.

Order of the Day: District Board Report: Trent Smith presented highlights from the work of the District Board as they related to the first two of four categories drawn from the District mission statement.

1. Empowering Existing Ministries. These included Brethren Disaster Ministries, celebrating 30 years of ministry at the Living Peace Church of the Brethren, and Camping and Retreat Ministries.

2. Empowering Emerging Ministries. These included potential senior ministries at Lower Miami, the church plant at 10 Wilmington Place, District Hispanic Ministries, and a possible church plant in Lexington, KY.

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Introduction of Visitors, David Shetler: Guests included Scott Douglas from Brethren Benefit Trust and Jonathan Shively from Congregational Life Ministries.

Results of slate: Moderator Bowser shared that the District slate had been affirmed.

Announcements; Adjournment for evening worship

Saturday Morning

Moderator Bowser called the business session to order. Trent Smith led us in opening devotions.

Order of the day: Reports

1. **Brethren Retirement Community:** John Warner brought greetings from BRC. He shared about their ministry, their new tag line: “Traditional Values, Innovative Services,” and how BRC might partner with congregations and individuals. He concluded with a video highlighting their Senior Fit program and thanked the District for its ongoing support.
2. **Denominational Report:** Representatives shared a video highlighting denominational agencies.
 - 2.1. Brethren Benefit Trust: Scott Douglas spoke about the pension plan, BBT’s socially responsible investing screens, the possible return of the Brethren Medical Plan, the Church Workers Assistance Plan, and the workshops BBT can bring to congregations. He shared that Brethren Pension Plan completed its first year with a new record keeper. He invited attendees to let BBT know if they know someone interested in serving on the BBT board.
 - 2.2. Church of the Brethren and the General Secretary: Jonathan Shively brought greetings. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve on behalf of the denomination. He shared a bit about our ministries in Nigeria, Haiti, and through Congregational Life Ministries.
 - 2.3. Time was given to ask denominational representatives questions.
3. Delegates accepted the reports from the denominational agencies.

Proposal from the Troy Church of the Brethren: Jon Keller presented a letter regarding the sale of the Woodland Altars property. In it, the Troy congregation brought the following proposal:

1. That the Southern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren develop and execute a plan to sell Woodland Altars. This plan shall include the following points:
 - 1.1. If at all possible, the property should be sold to a conservancy organization for as close to market value as feasible.
 - 1.2. The proceeds resulting from the above sale should be used to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ through a series of endowments managed by the District. Full transparency shall be maintained on the disposition of funds.
 - 1.3. If at all possible, a portion of the land currently known as Woodland Altars shall be made available for purchase or lease by members of the Church of the Brethren.

Letter from Nature Conservancy: Ross Lebold of the Nature Conservancy shared about Nature Conservancy’s work in Southwestern Ohio. He presented their offer to purchase 380+ acres of the Woodland Altars property for \$798,000. A time for questions followed.

Program and Arrangements Team’s recommended framework regarding Troy Church of the Brethren’s proposal to sell the camp: Mark Bowman and Program and Arrangements Team presented the background of their recommended framework and the framework itself.

Response by a representative from the Friends of Woodland Altars: Ken Oren and Nick Kraus presented the Friends of Woodland Altars response in favor of the Troy proposal. A time for questions followed. They clarified that the FoWA would like to purchase the property, using the Brethren Retirement Community as a model for the relationship between Woodland Altars and District congregations. They were in the process of organizing as a nonprofit in Ohio. They stated that if FoWA were not yet recognized as a nonprofit or did not yet have the funds needed to purchase the acreage in

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question, the sale to Nature Conservancy could go ahead and the sale to FoWA could happen later.

Response by a representative from District Board: Larry Tyner presented the District Board response to the Program and Arrangements recommendation.

Table Talk: Delegates were given time to discuss the Troy proposal, the Nature Conservancy offer, and the responses from Program and Arrangements, Friends of Woodland Altars, and the District Board.

Saturday Afternoon

The afternoon session opened with Nan Erbaugh leading congregational singing and Andrew Wright leading in prayer.

Order of the day: Presentation from the Ministerial Leadership Team: Ty Pyles and David Shetler recognized ordination anniversaries.

Congratulations!

5 years: Gary Cloyd, Sandra Jenkins, John Shelton, Paula Ulrich, Shawn Wilges,
Juanita Yaezell

10 years: John Sgro, Dewayne Heck, Deb Oskin

15 years: Vicky Ullery

20 Years: Paula Bowser, Dean Garrett

25 years: Tara Hornbacker, Mike Oskin

35 years: John Edwards, Bob Kurtz

40 years: Tom Bowser, Russell Merrit

60 years: Butler Sizemore, Wilbur Mullen

Order of the Day: District Board Report: Trent Smith presented highlights from the work of the District Board as they related to the remaining categories drawn from the District mission statement.

1. Empowering Leaders. These included the Ethics Seminar, the work of the Ministry Commission, the New Pastor/Situation Retreat, the Preconference Leadership Gathering, the 2015 "Toward a 20/20 Vision Leadership Conference," and David Shetler's work of discernment and nurture.
2. Empowering Congregations: These included the Missional Renewal Team toolbox, congregations using the Congregational Vitality Survey (from the Congregational Life Team), and congregations participating in the Vital Ministry Journey.

Action Item: Framework for Troy Query and Conservation Group Offer:

1. Time was given for questions and comments regarding this action item.
2. Art Fourman and Susan Liller provided an update on the maintenance and improvements made to the camp within the past year.
 - 2.1. The boiler in Heritage Lodge was replaced to keep pipes from freezing. The majority of money was spent on maintenance, cutting grass, electric, and telephone. During the winter of 2014, chalets had water pipes freeze and burst. Insurance largely covered the cost of repairs. Money was also spent on back valves for the chalets. As of District Conference, the chalets were rentable and had been fully scheduled.
 - 2.2. The expense budget was divided into two parts: the camping program and the Adams County facilities. Facility expenses did not include bringing the camp up to the requirements given by Gerald Harley and by our insurance company. While effort had been made to maintain the facility, only the chalets met the safety and health requirements.
3. The Program and Arrangements Team presented the following recommendation:
 - 3.1. The proposal from the Troy congregation be accepted with the Program and Arrangements Team coordinating efforts of the interested parties to arrive at an acceptable plan.
 - 3.2. A special District Conference be called with a target date within the first quarter of 2015 to present a plan for approval by the delegates regarding the Woodland Altars property and

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related issues.

4. A vote was taken to approve the Program and Arrangements Team recommendation. The recommendation was approved.

Recommendation from West Charleston: Seeing the brokenness in the District, the West Charleston Church of the Brethren made the following recommendation, presented by Maureen Tape and Irv Heishman:

1. The West Charleston Church of the Brethren recommends that the Southern Ohio District Conference affirm its support for the continuation of the professional reconciliation process led by KIPCOR (Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution affiliated with Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas), and provide the needed financing for it.
2. Program and Arrangements Team respectfully motioned to table the recommendation based on previous Conference decisions.
 - 2.1. Time was made for questions and comments.
 - 2.2. David Shetler expressed appreciation to West Charleston for KIPCOR's services. Based on a conversation about the current state of the District, KIPCOR thought it good to withdraw from the process.
3. A vote was taken to approve the Program and Arrangements Team recommendation. The recommendation was approved.

District Staff Reports

1. **District Executive's Report:** David Shetler highlighted two upcoming events. On May 14-16, 2015, the Council of District Executives will be sponsoring a leadership conference in Frederick, MD: Gifted by God, Called by the Church, Empowered by the Spirit. Next year's District Conference will be a visioning conference with minimum business: Toward a 20/20 Vision. It will meet all day Friday and all day Saturday. David thanked those serving as interim pastors. He also recognized those going off the District Board: Judy Boles, Mindy Tipton, and Tom Bowser. He concluded by sharing the current status of EYN. The floor was opened for questions.
2. **Director of District Communications' Report:** Mary Boone shared that she serves as the District Conference manager. She thanked the Happy Corner congregation and conference volunteers for their service. Mary produces the newsletter and maintains the District website and database. She worked with Resource Development on a "case statement" brochure highlighting District ministries and on a new District logo. She is also collecting video testimonies about District ministries and shared a video about Camping and Retreat ministries. Looking into the future, Mary's goal is to create a social media presence for the District. She asked that delegates share any District information with her to facilitate better communication. The floor was opened for questions.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Susan Liller walked delegates through the 2013 financial statement. At the end of 2013, the District General Fund contained \$27,898.27 and the Extended Ministries Fund contained a little over \$224,000. Individual giving was good for 2013. Susan highlighted how Brethren Disaster Ministries money had been used. Then, she shared a draft of the 2014 financial statement through September 2014. Year to date, the District experienced a loss in the General Fund. The Camping and Retreat Ministries Commission also experienced a loss and money was transferred from the timber funds, as approved by the District Board, to cover that loss. Church allocations were behind YTD and as compared to September 2013. The floor was opened for questions after the finances for each year were presented.
4. Delegates accepted the reports from the District Staff.

Presentation of 2015 District budget: Carl Eubank presented the 2015 budget. He focused on key ministries and how they played out in the budget. He invited delegates to see Doug Donohoo for ways to help District ministries and encouraged them to support the District budget with pledges or contributions. He noted that the District Board was not presenting a negative budget. Instead, it

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depended on individuals to fund ministries. The floor was opened for questions and comments. Carl noted that Resource Development Commission was planning to raise funds through individual contributions. Carl also addressed concern that the District will continue to draw on timber funds until they are gone.

A vote was taken to approve the 2015 District budget. The budget was approved.

Offering for the District budget: Carl Eubank

Conference Wrap Up

2014 Moderator Tom Bowser thanked West Charleston for the gift of KIPCOR and the many people who made District Conference possible. He transferred leadership to 2015 Moderator Mark Bowman and Moderator-Elect Judy Boles.

The 2015 District Conference theme is "Toward a 20/20 Vision." The date and the place had yet to be determined.

The 160th Southern Ohio District Church of the Brethren District Conference adjourned at 4:19 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Wendy Noffsinger Erbaugh
District Clerk**

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