

55th District Conference Minutes
Northern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren
August 3-4, 2018 – Dupont Church of the Brethren

Moderator – Terry Porter, Dupont CoB

Moderator-elect – Doug Price, Elm Street CoB

Clerk – Nancy Jacobsen, Mount Pleasant CoB

Opening: Moderator Terry Porter offered prayer. Pastor Steve Heishorn gave a welcome from the Dupont Church of the Brethren. The meeting was called to order. The theme of conference is “The Good Life”.

Roll Call: Clerk Nancy Jacobsen conducted the roll call of delegates. There were 70 delegates for 36 of our 47 churches.

Approval of Agenda: (in delegate packet) Moderator Terry Porter called for the approval of the agenda by a show of hands. The agenda for the day was approved.

Consecration of delegates: Moderator-elect Doug Price led the consecration of the delegates.

Conference rules: Moderator-elect Doug Price reviewed the conference rules. Moderator Terry Porter asked that the rule of speaking for five minutes be changed to two minutes. This was not opposed.

Introduction of conference officers: Moderator Terry Porter introduced the conference officers.

Introduction of Guests: Moderator-elect Doug Price introduced the guests for the day.

Table Time Connection: Time was given for delegates to visit briefly and introduce themselves to those at the same table.

New Business item #1- ballot: (sample ballot on page 11) Doug Price, Moderator-elect, presented the ballot on behalf of the Nominating Committee. He asked for nominations from the floor. There being none it was properly moved and seconded to accept the ballot.

District Staff Reports:

Kris Hawk, District Executive (report on page 17-18) –. She referred to her written report in the conference booklet and introduced paid district staff. She expressed her gratitude for being able to serve as DE and for the district staff. She challenged us to be people of prayer.

Linda Fry, Peace & Conciliation Worker (report on page 21) –Linda described people and resources to help with conflicts within the district. She called for prayer for those that work toward peace in our world.

District Board: Tom Zuercher, District Board Chairman – (report on page 22) Tom recognized those that are serving on the District Board at this time. It is their job to implement the decisions of the district conference.

Fellowship Commission: Billi Janet Burkey, Chairman– (report on page 27) The Women’s Retreat has been set. Men’s Fellowship is working to set up some activities. The fellowship has been re-named the Connections Commission. They are working to make better connections between churches. Their desire is to have congregations work together to learn, to fellowship and to connect.

Congregational Commission: Barbara Wilch, Chairman – (report on page 23) There were five goals: to identify and equip additional members for the Peace Task Team and Shalom Team; to explore and promote church growth opportunities; to establish and improve connections with the Congregational Commission and all churches in the Northern Ohio District; to encourage churches to access the Hottle Grants and recommend the appropriate grants to the District Board; and to assist in the process of fellowships moving toward church status. Fourteen grants were awarded this year.

New Business Item #2: Faith in Action Status (page 26)

The District Board recommends that the Faith in Action Church of the Brethren “Fellowship” be commissioned as a “Congregation” in the Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren. Tom Zuercher, District Board Chairman, presented the recommendation. Pastor Jim and Julia Gorrell were called forward to be recognized. This is a recommendation of joy. A vote was taken and prayer was offered. The recommendation was approved.

Bible Study - Pastor Patrick Bailey led a devotion time, reading from Luke 5. Jesus was willing to be out among the people, He didn’t wait for them to come and find Him. The people were listening to the word of God. Jesus used the resources that He had available by using the boat so that more people could hear Him. We are also called to go out to the people. We are called to preach the Word – boldly and in love. We are called to use the resources that we have. Then we need to spend time working on discipleship, just as Jesus did.

Discipleship Commission – (report on page 27) Chairman Maria Nichols announced the name change of this commission to the Stewardship and Finance Commission. There is a signed purchase agreement for the Water Street property.

District Financial Reports:

Treasurer’s Report - (report on page 29) Lisa Snyder, District Treasurer gave her report. Jody Bartter has been reviewing our accounts for several years. She has asked to step down from this position. Cynthia Allen will be reviewing our monthly finances beginning in August. The 2018 YTD reports are in the delegate packet.

District Financial Secretary – (report on page 37) Jen Recker referred to papers in the delegate packet regarding District Budget Self Allocations.

New Business Item #3: 2018 Budget (page 38) Lisa Snyder, District Treasurer, presented the proposed 2018 budget. A vocal vote of aye/nay was called for by Moderator Terry Porter. The budget was passed.

Ministerial Commission – (report on page 28) Steve Simmons, Commission Chairman, talked about interviewing ministers via “Zoom”, and announced that we have received our certificate for our Buckeye Brethren Institute training. Paul Bozman, Ministry Education Director, shared more about the BBI. He shared highlights from his report that was included with the delegate packets. He also pointed out flyers of training that is available for the next year.

New Business Item #4: Resolution on Same Sex Weddings: (page 41) Tom Zuercher, District Board Chairman and Steve Simmons from the District Ministerial Commission presented the resolution. The District Board worked on this resolution and brought it to the district conference. It is being brought as a motion from the district board. This statement is adopted from the Shenandoah District, edited to serve the Northern Ohio District. Time was given for delegate discussion at the delegate tables. Tom responded to questions from the tables. Each local church should decide who is received as a member. The second question often asked was if the resolution held anything new or different from content brought to annual conference – the answer is no. It is not expected that we will all agree about the subject.

Questions from the floor:

Terry Vaught (Paradise CoB) He wanted to congratulate us on helping us to get together on this topic. He is also sad because of divisions in churches because of the topic because of knowing people that are gay.

Clyde Fry (Mansfield), He is unhappy because he doesn't like the church to have so many rules within the church. Divorce was the hot button of his day. He supports the denomination's stance but is tired of playing defense. The ten commandments didn't keep Israel righteous. We need to address the beauty of the sexual relationship that God created. People need to hear us present the positive.

Denise Layman (Hartville), asked for clarification on the section that seems to state that homosexuality is not acceptable for the members of our congregations.

Candi Orr (Woodworth), agreed with Clyde.

Wayne Hochstetler (Chippewa) He was pleased that the board had passed this paper. His church passed a resolution of their own that was similar to this one. He spoke in favor of this paper.

Brian Layman (Hartville) NYC came together with many different points of view. If you feel any reluctance because of condemnation felt from some beside you, we are called to wash one another's feet. Anything that distracts us from serving others is a distraction.

Barbara Caster (Sugar Creek West) She does not agree with what is not in the Bible. We can hate the sin and love the sinner.

Mark Teal (Black River CoB) Be true to what God tells us to do – this is not hate. The reason this needs brought up again is because we need to protect ourselves as best we can. Advise each congregation to look at constitution to keep you from being in a bad spot legally.

Sherry Vaught (Paradise) The church should not be afraid of the world. She disagrees in many ways with this resolution. If one person is kept from Jesus due to these rules, then we have sinned. She will obey, but urged careful consideration before we vote.

Tom Zuercher, District Board Chairman – The goal of this resolution is clarity for Northern Ohio.

Jim Gorrell (Faith in Action) brought a motion for an amendment addressing section (a) of the resolution. Sherry Vaught (Paradise) seconded. After a vote taken by a show of hands, the amendment was opposed.

Barbara Caster (Sugar Creek West) – If they are members of the church, can they serve on commissions? [Answer from Tom Zuercher - this would be up to the local congregation]

A vote on the original paper was taken on a paper vote. Votes of yes/no/abstain are acceptable. District Conference officers decided on a 2/3 vote to pass. Abstain votes do not become part of the 2/3 vote.

Mark Teal(Black River)A question was asked about the 2/3 vote. He stated his preference for a majority vote but declined to make it a formal request.

Ellen Speicher (Woodworth) Asked about the 70 delegates. [Answer from the clerk - This number comes from those registered, not from the roll call.]

The resolution passed by 86%. The break-down is as follows: 60 delegates voted in favor of the resolution and 10 delegates were opposed. There were no abstentions.

National Youth Conference – Esther Harsh, District youth coordinator, gave a report and shared a slide show of NYC. Several youth also shared about their experiences at the conference.

Camp Reports

Camp Administrator, Shannon Kahler, (report page 43) reported that numbers were up again. 295 campers attended this year. She talked about some new camps planned for next year such as an “all girls” camp.

Camp Administrative Committee, Jim Shives, talked about how camp is working all year round. He thanked Linda Worthen who was the camp secretary and is now going off after completing her 2 terms. Wayne and Bonnie Brockway had served as treasurer. They will be stepping down and Paul Bozman will serve in this area. He thanked all of the workers and volunteers that serve the camp.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Moderator-elect – Brad Kelley, East Chippewa

District Board, Central Area – Charlene Kuhn, Richland (full term); Patrick Bailey, North Bend (full term); Mark Pollock, Brook Park Community (filling existing vacancy ending 2020)

District Board, Western Area - Deb Beer, County Line; Barbara Wilch, Lakewood

District Board, Eastern Area – Billi Janet Burkey, Center; Ellen Speicher, Woodworth

District Conference Central Committee – Fern Dews, East Nimishillen
Nominating Committee, Eastern Area – Mike Zellers, Freeburg
Nominating Committee, Western Area – Fred Brinkman, Sugar Creek West
Standing Committee – Ben Polzin, Poplar Ridge
Camp Administration Committee – Nelson Hunt, Ashland First; Jim Shives, Akron
Eastwood; Sierra Swanson, Brook Park Community
Good Shepherd Home Board of Trustees – Rhonda Schulte, Dupont
West View Healthy Living Board of Trustees – Edith Kieffaber, Akron Eastwood

Compelling Vision – Michaela Alphonse, Atlantic South District, showed a video. Compelling Vision Working Group, Compelling Vision Processing Team have worked to establish a guiding statement which she read. They ask for wide participation and much conversation. Sessions will be held in Northern Ohio October 13 and 14 (flyer in delegate packet). Annual Conference for 2019 will work toward discernment. She offered a website for further information: Brethren.org/compellingvision.

ORDER OF THE DAY: Recognition of Ordained Ministers – District Executive, Kris Hawk and the Ministerial Commission recognized the following ordained ministers within the district: For one year of ordained service: Dean Foster (Black River), Tina Hunt (Ashland First), For five years: Cullen Thompson (Black River), Ben Polzin (Poplar Ridge), For 10 years: Kris Hawk (Akron Springfield), For 20 years: Alan Brumbaugh (Akron Springfield), Joe Routh (Black River), Paul Bartholomew (Mohican), For 25 years: Terry Vaught (Paradise), Jim Lifer (Owl Creek), For 40 years: James Washington (Brook Park), Timothy Bartholomew (Zion Hill); for 50 years: Don Earlenbaugh (Ashland Dickey), For 52 years: Paul Myers (Maple Grove); For 53 years: John Bartholomew (Zion Hill); For 61 years: Delbert Kettering (East Chippewa); For 63 years: Carl Cawood (Ashland First) and Clyde Fry (Mansfield); For 67 years, Horace Huse (Lakewood); For 72 years: Wayne Wheeler (New Philadelphia).

Church of the Brethren Agency Reports:

Mission and Ministry Board – (report on page 58-59) Stan Dueck introduced himself and shared a DVD which highlighted work of the agencies. He thanked the delegate body for prayers and support. He described several events that have taken place this past year.

Bethany Seminary – (report on page 60) Jeff Carter, President of Bethany Seminary spoke about some new programs and experiences. They are working to make things more accessible and more affordable.

Brethren Benefit Trust – (report on page 55-56) The representative, Loyce Borgmann, was recognized.

On Earth Peace – (report on page 57) Information was given through the DVD presentation.

Standing Committee: (report in delegate packet) Ben Polzin reported on the meetings held in Cincinnati this past year. He encouraged delegates to be a part of the conversations that are held throughout the district.

Brethren Homes: (report in delegate packet)
Barry Belknap, Good Shepherd Home and pastor of Jonah's Fellowship reported. He expressed his appreciation for the support of this district.

Acceptance of Reports: A motion was properly made and seconded to accept the reports. This motion passed. Moderator Terry Porter closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Jacobsen, clerk

2018 District Conference delegates:

Adrian – none

Akron Eastwood – Paul Bozman, Gary Lorenz

Akron First – Gary Bennett

Akron Springfield – Mike Conner, Dawn Conner

Ashland Dickey – Cathy Emminger, Rod Matz

Ashland First – Pete Snyder, Nelson Hunt

Bethel – none

Black River – Mark Teal

Bristolville – Joan Parker, Donna Holko

Brook Park – Mike Ramser, Alice Ramser

Center – Marj Ewart, Beverli Sweitzer

Chippewa – none

County Line – Jared Williams, Stacey Williams

Danville North Bend/Clear Fork – Raymond Bell, Marilyn Bell, Joy Parr

Defiance - none

Dupont – Leland Noffsinger, Doris Noffsinger

East Chippewa – Wayne Hochstetler, Sandy Hochstetler, Ellen Moore

East Nimishillen – Fern Dews, Carol Kuryn

Eden – none

Elm Street – Randy Pugin, Christine Harkless

Faith in Action Fellowship – James Gorrell, Julia Gorrell

Freeburg – Ed Wartluft, Dodie Wartluft

Hartville – Denise Layman, Faith Sheaffer-Polen
Jonah’s People – Barry Belknap
Lake Breeze – none
Lakewood – Maria Nichols, Barbara Wilch
Lick Creek – Douglas Hohenberger, Gloria Hohenberger
Mansfield First – Paul Wymer, Vaughn Loose
Maple Grove – Gloria Bloomquist, Arzonla Laurent
Marion First - none
Mohican – Melinda Hill, Beau Rector, Cynthia Eberly
Mount Pleasant – Mary King, Ken Rummell
New Philadelphia – Howie Jones, Pattie Jones
Owl Creek – none
Painesville – John Bocchieri, Sondra Bocchieri
Paradise – Sherry Vaught
Pleasant View – David Bassett, Kim Bassett
Poplar Ridge – Katie Polzin, Betty Peterson
Reading – none
Richland – Charlene Kuhn
Ross – none
Silver Creek – Ron Lawrence, Veronica Lawrence
Sugar Creek East – none
Sugar Creek West – Barbara Caster, Linda Bell
Swan Creek – Karen Ford, Cyndee Stevenson
Woodworth – Ellen Speicher, Candie Orr
Zion Hill – Jay Clark, Mary Clark