

56th District Conference Minutes
Northern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren
August 2-3, 2019 – Mohican Church of the Brethren

Moderator – Doug Price, Elm Street CoB

Moderator-elect – Brad Kelley, East Chippewa CoB

Clerk – Nancy Jacobsen, Mount Pleasant CoB

Opening: Moderator Doug Price offered prayer. Pastor Paul Bartholomew gave a welcome from the Mohican Church of the Brethren. The meeting was called to order. The theme of conference is “Give Me Jesus”.

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 conference booklet) Moderator Doug Price called for the approval of the agenda by a verbal response. The agenda for the day was approved.

Consecration of delegates: Moderator-elect Brad Kelley led the consecration of the delegates.

Conference rules: Moderator-elect Brad Kelley reviewed the conference rules.

Introduction of conference officers: Moderator Doug Price introduced the conference officers.

Introduction of Guests: Moderator-elect Brad Kelley 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 12) Brad Kelley, Moderator-elect, presented the ballot on behalf of the Nominating Committee. He asked for nominations from the floor. None were received.

District Staff Reports:

Kris Hawk, District Executive (report on page 17-18) – She referred to her written report in the conference booklet. She expressed her gratitude for being able to serve as DE and for the district staff. She encouraged us to pray for the different areas of ministry in our district as well as for each of the individual congregations and pastors.

Linda Fry, Peace & Conciliation Advocate (report on page 20-21) – She expressed her appreciation for the privilege to work in this area. She described the opportunity to attend several camps to help teach campers the peace and reconciliation view. She briefly discussed the annual Peace Auction. She pointed out many resources available at the display table.

Esther Harsh, District Youth Coordinator (report on page 19) – Esther was working with the youth, but did not have a written report available.

District Board: Bruce Jacobsen, District Board Chairman (report on page 22) – He emphasized some funds that are available to congregations for various needs. He pointed out some cuts that were made in the budget. He also discussed the decision to forgive Kris

Bair for her embezzlement of district funds in 2014. The board decided that since Jesus paid a debt that we could never pay and forgave us so much, we should do no less.

Congregational Commission: Mark Pollock, Vice Chairman (report on page 23) – The commission is working on an Urban Ministry opportunity in Toledo. He highlighted the Hottle Grant and the amounts that have been awarded to congregations for various needs during this past year. He encouraged congregations to apply for these grants. Doug Price suggested a report be given at some time in the future that tells the stories of those who have received these funds.

Charlene Kuhn (Richland CoB) came to the microphone to share the experience of her congregation with the blessing of the Hottle Grant funds toward a needed sump pump.

Connections Commission: Billi Janet Burkey, Chairman (report on page 25) – The goal of the commission is to bring us closer together. Paper strips were passed out. People were encouraged to print the name of their congregation on each strip and then a chain was made to demonstrate our congregational connectedness. She talked about the SISTERS Women's group and Men's Fellowship and the marriage retreat sponsored by the Mt. Pleasant Congregation. She asked for people to offer suggestions on ways to connect our churches. She also discussed the Open Roof Fellowship which helps congregations be more accepting of people with disabilities. Center CoB was recognized as an Open Roof congregation and a certificate from the denomination was presented.

Ministerial Commission: Steve Simmons, Chairman (report on page 25) – He expressed his excitement about meeting with pastors and prospective pastors. They now meet on computers in various locations via Zoom which is much more convenient and cost-effective. This way they are able to interview with candidates that are seeking licensing, commissioning or ordination.

Buckeye Brethren Institute: Paul Bozman, Ministry Education Director (report on page 26) – There are now 14 students that are part of the program. He gave thanks for people that have helped teach classes for this program. Comments in favor of the program were taken from the floor.

Stewardship and Finance Commission: Maria Nichols, Chairman (report on page 27) – With the sale of Water Street they were able to create a Church Improvement Loan Fund free of interest for congregations. An insight session was made available for more information. She expressed the need to increase Self-Allocations from the churches.

Treasurer's Report: Lisa Snyder, Treasurer (report on page 29-38) – Two new accounts this year are the Church Improvement Loan and some money that was put into CD's. She directed attention to the 2018 report provided in the agenda booklet. She also pointed out the Auditing and financial review report of Cynthia Allen on page 39-40.

Financial Secretary's Report: Jen Recker, Financial Secretary (2018 Year End report on page 38 and 2019 Year to Date in Delegate Packet) – The July YTD 2019 paper reflects the giving thus far. There was a substantial giving in July. This only reflects self-allocations given to the District Budget.

New Business Item #2 - 2019 Budget: A proposed budget was available on pages 41-43 of the conference booklet. Each commission was encouraged to reduce their budget where possible.

Sherry Vaught (Paradise CoB) – Offered a thank you for the work that has been done.

Bruce Jacobsen (District Board Chairman) – Offered his appreciation that congregations have been making contributions toward district finances even though many local congregations are also struggling financially.

David Bassett (Stewardship and Finance) – Provided charts to help us visualize the financial situation. These charts and more information about “Bridging the Gap” were in the delegate packet and also available at the Stewardship and Finance display table.

Brian Layman (Hartville CoB) – We are moving from a position of moving on from simply relying on the Hottle Funds to seriously consider what we are spending our funds on and finding ways to increase giving.

The budget was approved by a show of hands.

Church of the Brethren Agency Reports:

Mission and Ministry Board – (written report on page 60)

Bethany Seminary – (written report on page 63)

Brethren Benefit Trust – (written report on page 56-57) Scott Douglas, Director of Client Relations, spoke to conference attendees to describe the services offered by this organization. He also provided a short video.

On Earth Peace – (written report page 58-59) Jen Houser, Non Violence Organizer and Zak Houser, shared the vision and services of this organization.

Compelling Vision/Annual Conference Updates: Paul Munday, Moderator Church of the Brethren (written report in delegate packet) – A full list of questions asked at Annual Conference can be found on the Compelling Vision webpage (www.brethren.org/compellingvision). A time of prayer around the tables for the district and the denomination followed Paul’s report.

ELECTION RESULTS: (All were elected for 3-year terms unless otherwise specified)

Moderator-elect – Brian Layman (Hartville)

District Board, Central Area – Tina Hunt (Ashland First), Beverly Wengerd (Paradise)

District Board, Western Area – David Bassett (Pleasant View), 3-year term; Kevin Wilson (Dupont), 3-year term; Jim Gorrell (Faith in Action), 2-year term

District Board, Eastern Area – Agnes Hayhurst (Reading), Bruce Jacobsen (Mt. Pleasant)

District Conference Central Committee – Christine Harkless (Elm Street)

Nominating Committee, Central Area – Sherry Vaught (Paradise)

Nominating Committee, Western Area – Jim Masten (Lick Creek)

Camp Administration Committee – Jessi Adams (Ashland Dickey), Jean Nesbitt (Akron Springfield), Ed Wartluft (Freeburg)

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: Steve Heilshorn (Dupont), David Wyant (Bethel); for *five years*: Paul Bozman (Akron Eastwood); for *10 years*: Barry Belknap (Jonah’s People), Max Canfield (New Philadelphia), Karl Stone (Akron Springfield); for *20 years*: Jim Gorrell (Faith in Action); for *25 years*: Doug Price (Dupont); for *51 years*: Don Earlenbaugh (Ashland Dickey), for *53 years*: Paul Myers (Maple Grove); For *54 years*: John Bartholomew (Zion Hill); for *62 years*: Delbert Kettering (Maple Grove); for *64 years*: Carl Cawood (Ashland First) and Clyde Fry (Mansfield); for *68 years*, Horace Huse (Lakewood); and for *73 years*: Wayne Wheeler (New Philadelphia).

Church of the Brethren General Secretary: David Steele brought greetings and words of encouragement. His written report was printed on page 60 of the conference booklet. He spoke of much work done by employees and volunteers of the denomination.

Camp Reports:

Camp Executive Director – Shannon Kahler (written report on pages 44-45 in the conference booklet) shared a video of camps from the 2019 summer camp season. There were 285 children from Church of the Brethren with another 500 kids served throughout the summer. Fall Festival is scheduled for September 14, 2019 with some new activities planned. The camp is working with the Church of God and will plan camping opportunities alongside our own camp programs. They have begun a fundraiser called “Make a Change”.

Camp Administration Committee – Kerri Bailey, Vice Chairman (written report in Delegate Packet) brought a report from CAC. We are trying to be proactive to increase funding to continue our camp programs. They are looking for BVS volunteers to help with staff. They are also looking for alternatives to help with the utility bills. They are looking for new ways to market the camp in more cost effective ways. Paul Bozman has resigned as treasurer for the camp and CAC is looking for a replacement. She encouraged people to prayerfully consider ways to support the camp.

Camp Financial Report – Paul Bozman, Treasurer described the responsibilities of the camp treasurer. The financial report was provided on pages 46-49 of the conference booklet. Because of the sale of some timber, the camp ended the year in the black. Some items were cut from the budget for this year. The income from the Church of God partnership will help with expenses. A copy of a balanced budget for 2020 was included in the Delegate Packet.

Standing Committee: Ben Polzin, Delegate (written report in Delegate Packet) Ben reported on the meetings held this past year. The focus of Annual Conference this year has been the Compelling Vision. This next year will call for a vote on this vision. He encouraged delegates to attend Annual Conference be a part of the conversations next summer. We want to have the Northern Ohio district be represented well. He asked for people to consider making nominations for various positions.

Brethren Homes:

Good Shepherd Home – Chris Widman, Director (written report on page 51) – He reported that their budget is balanced. There are over 300 residents. There are yearly about 50 “celebration of life” services. There are over 200 staff positions. He talked about many programs that are offered for staff and for residents.

West View Health Living – A written report only was available on pages 52-53 of the conference booklet.

Ohio Council of Churches: Dr. Jack Sullivan, Executive Director spoke as a representative. He then made himself available for questions.

Peace Task Team: Mark Pollock represented the team. He offered envelopes with money and challenged people to take the envelopes, invest the money using God-given talents, multiply the funds and return next year with the results.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Jacobsen, clerk

2019 District Conference delegates:

Adrian – none

Akron Eastwood – Gary Lorenz, Rebecca Ebie

Akron First – none

Akron Springfield – Mike Conner, Dawn Conner

Ashland Dickey – Jessi Adams, Sarah Koch

Ashland First – Mary Bright, Tina Hunt

Bethel – none

Black River – Dean Foster, Mark Teal

Bristolville – Joan Parker, Donna Holko

Brook Park – Alice Ramser, Anitra Kraus

Center – Marjorie Ewart, Laura Kell

Chippewa – none

County Line – Ken Kline, Gloria Kline, Ann McKinley

Defiance - none

Dupont – Colette Brown, Jeff Prowant

East Chippewa – Mavern King, Ellen Moore, Helen Taylor

East Nimishillen – Jim Houmard, Beatriz Houmard

Eden – Jill Aldridge, Marty Brumbaugh

Elm Street – Christine Harkless

Faith in Action Congregation – James Gorrell, Julia Gorrell

Freeburg – Ed Wartluft, Dodie Wartluft

Hartville – Brian Layman, Kay Powell

Jonah's People – Barry Belknap

Lake Breeze – none

Lakewood – **John Johnston** (not present?), Maria Nichols

Lick Creek – James Masten, Janice Masten

Mansfield First – Vaughn Loose

Maple Grove – Andrew Cuffman, Shannon Cuffman

Marion First - none
Mohican – Beulah Bowman, Tom McWilliams, Kim McWilliams
Mount Pleasant – Brenda Ebner, Ken Rummell
New Philadelphia – Howie Jones, Pattie Jones
North Bend/Danville & Clear Fork Preaching Points – Raymond Bell, Marilyn Bell
Owl Creek – none
Painesville – Jon Bocchieri, Sondra Bocchieri
Paradise – Sherry Vaught, Beverly Wengerd
Pleasant View – Robert Driver, Lilly Driver
Poplar Ridge – Todd Clemens, Judy Clemens
Reading – Agnes Hayhurst, Virginia Bandy
Richland – Charlene Kuhn
Ross – none
Silver Creek – Terry Baldwin, Peggy McCormick
Sugar Creek East – none
Sugar Creek West – Michael Huffaker, Laura Huffaker
Swan Creek – none
Woodworth – Ellen Speicher
Zion Hill – Jay Clark, Mary Clark