

MINUTES OF SHENANDOAH DISTRICT CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 2 – 3, 2018
ANTIOCH CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
WOODSTOCK, VA 22664

The 2018 Shenandoah District Church of the Brethren Conference met November 2 and 3 at the Antioch Church of the Brethren. The theme for the District Conference was “On Christ the Solid Rock We Stand.”

A continuing education event for pastors was held on Friday afternoon at the Columbia Furnace Church of the Brethren in Edinburg, VA. The event was led by Professor Dan Ulrich of Bethany Theological Seminary.

The annual Milestones in Ministry Dinner was held prior to the opening worship service on Friday evening. Professor Dan Ulrich was the guest speaker. Twenty-five ministers ordained for fifty years or more were recognized. An additional fifteen ministers were recognized at five year milestones in their ordained ministry. Ten ministers who died since October 1, 2017 were remembered with gratitude for their service. The following Shenandoah District seminary and CGI graduates were also recognized: Bethany Theological Seminary - Katie and Tim Heishman, Jonathan Prater and Kyle Remnant; Eastern Mennonite Seminary - Gabe Dodd; Christian Growth Institute - Kathleen Michael and Linda Waggy.

The Friday evening worship service began with District Executive Minister, John Jantzi, leading a time of remembrance for Moderator Richi Yowell (*Mt. Olivet*) who died on July 7, 2018. A special display table included a beautifully crafted “Treasure Chest” that Richi commissioned Bev Andes, a member of the Mt. Olivet congregation, to construct for this year’s Conference. The jar containing the salt pellets used for the unity covenant at last year’s closing worship was also displayed. John Jantzi lit a candle of remembrance and invited worshippers to join him in prayer. Blended music was led by Leah Hileman (*Luray*), David Chappell (*White Hill*), Kim Northrup (*White Hill*), and Jonathan Prater (*Mt. Zion-Linville*). A Children’s Choir directed by Beth Jarrett (*Harrisonburg, First*) and accompanied by pianist, Stephen Farrar (*Sunrise*) also shared special music. Steve Spire (*Sangerville*) and Jan Orndorff (*Sugar Grove*) shared “Good News” congregational stories. The scripture passage from Matthew 6: 19-21 was read by Diann Whetzel (*Front Royal*). Chuck Davis (*Calvary*) preached the evening message entitled “For Where Your Treasure Is...” Worship attendance was 225. An offering of \$2,413.00 was received for the Nigeria Crisis Fund. An ice cream social was held at the conclusion of worship. Throughout the Conference, individuals were welcome to visit exhibit booths set up by various District and denominational groups and agencies.

Four worship segments were held on Saturday morning on the District Conference theme. Each segment included prayer, special music, scripture, and a meditation. Symbols for each segment were placed in the “Treasure Chest.” Themes for the worship blocks focused on “Living the Beatitudes Together” with a meditation from Nathan Rittenhouse (*New Hope*), “Living Together As Salt and Light” with a meditation from Regina Harlow (*Mountain View-McGaheysville*), “Living Together in Prayer” with a meditation from Gabe Dodd (*Montezuma*), and “Living on the Rock Together” with a meditation from Bev Funkhouser (*Round Hill*). Two lunch sessions were held. Conference participants were asked to attend one of the two insight sessions led by the District Discernment Team in the sanctuary before or after their lunch. This presentation focused on proposed steps in the Congregational Withdrawal process. It also included clarification of what happens to church property if a congregation ultimately chooses to leave the District/denomination. This was the first read of this document. It will be included as an action item on the 2019 District Conference agenda.

The afternoon Business session began at 1:30 PM. District Clerk, Bernie Fuska (*Timberville*), placed the Moderator’s Gavel on the Officer’s Table. Bernie reminded delegates that Moderator-elect, George Bowers (*Antioch*) is currently in the Holy Land. Bernie asked delegates to affirm a District Leadership Team recommendation naming Jonathan Brush (*Lebanon*) to serve as Convener for this Conference. This recommendation was made with the approval of the Moderator-elect George Bowers and the members of the Program and Arrangements Committee. Delegates unanimously affirmed this recommendation.

Jonathan called the Conference to order. The following Denominational guests were recognized: Nancy Heishman (Office of Ministry), Nevin Dulabaum and Everett Teetor (Brethren Benefit Trust), Mark Hoover (Brethren Mutual Aid), Dan Ulrich (Bethany Theological Seminary) and Torin Eikler (Northern Indiana District). Delegates were invited to sign a Delegate's Covenant and reminded that this was also a time for worship as we accomplish our work together. Conference appointments were announced including Patrick Starkey (*Cloverdale - Virgina District*) as Parliamentarian, Ellen Layman (*Dayton*) as Timekeeper, and Anita Landes (*Mill Creek*) and Gail Oleyar (*Mountain View - McGaheysville*) as Head Tellers.

The working business agenda was approved. Jonathan reviewed the Conference rules that included a three minute limit on the first speech and a two minute limit on the second speech. The 2017 District Conference minutes were approved as printed.

A total of 242 delegates were registered. This number included 61 pastors, 42 Board Chairs, and 139 elected delegates. There were 49 registered non-delegates including church and agency staff members. An offering of \$1,868.25 was received for District Ministries.

Jonathan presented the slate of church officers prepared by the Gifts Discernment Team. Delegates approved the slate as follows:

Moderator-elect: Marty Barlow (*Montezuma*)

Ministerial Leadership Team: Ryan Cooper (*Emmanuel*)

Leadership Development and Spiritual Formation Team: Jane Baker (*Round Hill*)

Clerk: Bernie Fuska (*Timberville*)

Gifts Discernment Team: Mary Sue McDonald (*Greenmount*)

Standing Committee: Jonathan Prater (*Mt Zion/Linville*)

A video was shown highlighting Church of the Brethren Ministries. Nevin Dulabaum shared a report from Brethren Benefit Trust reminding everyone that BBT is ready to help individuals in two main areas: retirement readiness and assisting organizations in the best use of financial resources.

District Executive Minister, John Jantzi, presented his report. John called attention to the Capital Improvement Project approved by the District Leadership Team. This project, with an estimated goal of \$400,000, will enable the District Office and Brethren Woods to make much needed improvements in Web site and structural areas. Doug Phillips, Associate District Executive – Outdoor Ministries, presented reflections on the way Brethren Woods is working “To Make Some Room for God.” Doug referred to program planning and staffing needs in his report. Director of Finance Gary Higgs (*Melrose*) presented an interpretation of the 2019 Proposed District Budget. Gary reported that, with a few exceptions, there was little change between 2018 and 2019.

The 2019 Proposed Working Budget of \$349,982.00 was approved.

John Jantzi presented a Compelling Vision Report in the absence of Kevin Daggett (*Dayton*) who serves on the Annual Conference Compelling Vision Process Team. John reported that Kevin plans to lead some District listening sessions this winter in three or four sections of the District in preparation for the 2019 Annual Conference. These listening sessions will enable individuals to share what is important to them in the Body of Christ as we center our lives in Jesus Christ.

The next business item was an Action Item from the District Leadership Team. This item contained three separate motions of recommended updates to the Shenandoah District Constitution. Each motion required a 2/3 vote for passage. David Miller (*Montezuma*), a member of the Constitution Revision Team, reminded delegates that these motions pertained to the District Constitution only and not the District Bylaws.

Motion 1: Beginning in Article I and continuing through Article XI, the District Leadership Team moves the approval of all editorial changes that involve capitalization, the striking of certain words, and other additions for clarification. This motion does not include changes that will be handled in subsequent motions concerning the Gifts Discernment Team (Article III) and the District Conference officers of Treasurer and Financial Secretary (Article VI). **Motion carried unanimously with a show of hands.**

Motion 2: In Article III, with respect to the Gifts Discernment Team, the Leadership Team recommends acceptance of changes in Letter A, number 9 (District Conference slate), and letter D, number 1 (chairperson).

Jonathan Prater (*Mt. Zion/Linville*) moved to amend this motion in the following way (amended portion in italics): In Article III, with respect to the Gifts Discernment Team, the Leadership Team recommends acceptance of changes in Letter A, number 9 *to read as follows: Call and affirm conference officers, the District Leadership Team, hereinafter referred to as the Leadership Team, and other personnel as called for in this Constitution. The slate will be presented as a unit to the District Conference. Nominations can made to this slate from the floor of District Conference. All nominations require a signed biographical statement from the nominee along with a properly supported motion to amend the slate. If a nominee is affirmed from the floor all unamended parts of the Slate will be affirmed as a unit, and a runoff vote will take place in the amended area(s).* The motion to amend was properly supported. Jan Orndorff (*Sugar Grove*) proposed an amendment to the amendment requesting that the words **using a paper ballot** be inserted between the words **place** and **in** as written in the last sentence of the Prater amendment. This motion was properly supported. **The Orndorff amendment was clearly approved by simple majority with a raised hand vote.** After some discussion, a counted raised hand vote was taken on Jonathan Prater's amendment that now included Jan Orndorff's approved amendment. This vote to amend also required a simple majority. **The motion to amend carried with the counted hand vote of 115 yes and 67 no votes.** After further discussion on the twice amended Motion Number 2, a paper ballot was distributed. The final approval of this amended Motion required a 2/3 majority. **The counted paper ballot vote was 112 in favor and 68 opposed. The amended Motion Number 2 failed with a percentage of 62.2%.*** A few delegates suggested that the Leadership Team should review this "calling/slate" process again but no formal motion was made to that effect.

Motion 3: In Article VI, concerning District Conference officers, the District Leadership Team moves that the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, and their descriptions found in Letters E and F, be removed from the Constitution and placed in the Bylaws. **Motion carried by an overwhelming show of hands.**

Wayne Pence (*Mountain View-McGaheysville*), Chair of the District Leadership Team, shared a report. Wayne expressed gratitude to the three new persons serving on the DLT. Wayne also mentioned that several Ministry Teams have been reviewing their purpose and are in the process of restructuring.

An Installation Service of newly called Personnel and the 2019 Moderator and Moderator-elect was led by John Jantzi. This consecration service included Moderator George Bowers (*Antioch*) (in absentia), Moderator-elect Marty Barlow (*Montezuma*), Ministerial Leadership Team - Ryan Cooper (*Emmanuel*), Leadership Development & Spiritual Formation Team - Jane Baker (*Round Hill*), District Clerk - Bernie Fuska (*Timberville*), Gifts Discernment Team - Mary Sue McDonald (*Greenmount*)(in absentia), and Standing Committee member, Jonathan Prater (*Mt. Zion-Linville*).

Jonathan Brush shared closing remarks and the Conference adjourned at 4:30 PM.

***Please see addendum to this vote on page 4 of these minutes**

Minutes recorded by Bernie Fuska, Clerk