

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Consistory, March 12, 2016

Church of the Good Shepherd, Boyertown

Attending: Bill Worley, Sharon Morris, Teresa McNamara, Rob Stilwell, Fred Schuetz, Harold Albitz, Jon Fogle, Steve Hamilton, Maureen Duffy-Guy, Barb Pence, Elaine Ely, Jennie Stauch, Kris Hayden

The meeting opened with prayer.

Appointments of leadership positions were accepted. (please attach report)

Consistory accepted with sadness the letter of resignation from Sam Brackeen as Vice Moderator and asks Selena to respond in writing, communicating gratitude for Sam's faithful and excellent service.

Sharon offered her report and asked Consistory to consider the two proposals to promote congregational growth and development, one from The Center for Progressive Renewal and one from the Epicenter Group. After considerable discussion and discernment, Consistory voted to contract with Epicenter, which is currently providing successful coaching services for congregations in the New York Conference, to provide coaching for up to 8 congregations and lead a workshop open to all our congregations.

Bill shared his report:

- feedback from his recent trip to Cuba and his recommendation that the Ecumenical Relations Team evaluate our relationships with churches both in Cuba and Germany in relation to the vision and mission of our Conference.
- A celebration dinner is being planned for Wanda Craner, and an opportunity to contribute to a cash gift to honor her many years of service will be extended to our congregations. The Consistory voted to compensate Wanda for 5 vacation days from 2015.
- Bill asked for volunteers from consistory who would be willing to continue the conversation with members of the Pennsylvania Northeast Conference about the future. Steve Hamilton, Jennie Strauch, Maureen Duffy-Guy, and Elaine Ely volunteered to serve. Consistory is in agreement that any discussion of merger be mission driven.
- John Dorhauer will be installed on April 15 at Riverside Church in NYC. Steve is working with Pennsylvania Northeast to charter a bus that would take interested persons to the installation.
- Funds available from our conference for new ministries in our congregations are being advertised on our website, with July 1 the first deadline for applications.

- Bill presented a position description for a new position: Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development. This is to be a part-time position (20-25 hours/week) with responsibility to help congregations increase their mission focus and church growth potential (please attach position description). After a thoughtful and thorough discussion, the consistory enthusiastically voted to move forward to seek a person for this new position.
- Bill announced that he had received a letter of resignation from Donna Tomlinson as Conference Registrar and Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister. She has accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania. Donna's letter was received with sadness. The consistory voted to present a gift of \$500 to Donna in recognition of her many years of excellent work.
- In the wake of this change, two new position descriptions were presented, one for Conference Registrar and Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister and one for Assistant for Search and Call and Conference Communications. Both positions are full time. After an open discussion that confirmed the need to encourage a new sense of teamwork and flexibility within the staff, the consistory voted to affirm the new position descriptions and move forward to fill the open position.
- Bill met with Fred Diehl, George Miller and Frank Schaeffer who are our Annuitant visitors. Recommended from their experience that we identify what one of them called a Chaplain for each Association.

The Personnel Committee is having the revised Personnel Policy reviewed in relation the Conference Constitution and By-Laws in order to move it forward.

Rob gave the Treasurers report. Income year to date is \$11,000 greater than anticipated in the budget while expenses are \$13,000 less than anticipated in the budget. The balance sheet, including endowments, shows assets of \$2.5 million and liabilities of \$8,800. Income from OCWM through February is \$3800 greater than anticipated by the budget. The Endowment Committee is drafting a policy regarding a more socially just approach to investment. Pledges for OCWM in 2016, when combined with the giving history of those churches who have not yet pledged is within a few thousand dollars of budgeted expenses for the year. It was suggested that we find a way to honor those churches who are increasing their OCWM pledge by at least 2% in 2016 in response to the 20/20 vision. It was also suggested that we have extra pledge cards available at the fall meeting for those who forgot.

Constitution and Bylaws: Attorney, David Balmer, has reviewed the proposed changes to the Conference Constitution and By-Laws, and the few minor changes he suggested are being made. A question was raised about the Conference Treasurer being bonded, and Bill offered to clarify the coverage offered by our UCC Insurance policy.

The Spring meeting of the Conference will include offerings being taken both at the Friday evening and Sunday morning worship services. Consistory asks that the Friday offering be designated to pension supplementation for Pennsylvania Southeast Conference retirees and the Sunday morning offering be divided equally between support for Members in Discernment and the National Youth Event.

After discussion, Consistory recommends that the **Fall Conference meeting** continue to be held on Sunday afternoon and that the fellowship hall be used for the meeting to facilitate discussion and relationship building.

The process moving towards the possible merger of the Reading, East Berks, Schuylkill, and Heidelberg Associations has now included a series of open discussions within the Associations to explain the reasons and anticipated benefits.

Details regarding the **current lease for our Conference Offices** will be researched so that in the fall the Consistory may consider the best options for the future.

The Pennsylvania Conference has been dismissed in the lawsuit brought against H.O. Davis.

The next Consistory meeting will be on April 30.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Kris Hayden