Conference Moderator’s Report

Andrea Asselmeier

April 2021

Wow! What a year it has been! We began my time as moderator as we were learning to shift gears in the midst of a global pandemic. And yet, after our first ever virtual Conference Annual Gathering in 2020, the work of the conference continues. Some highlights of our work, in no particular order are:

* We voted to co-host General Synod in 2025 with the Kansas Oklahoma Conference (we were supposed to be the hosts in 2021, however, General Synod 2021 is now virtual).
* We offered Micro-grants to local churches and specialized ministries.
* We continued the work of revising our bylaws.
* We gathered for a fall Conference meeting and celebrated the installation of Rev. Damien Lake as our Associate Conference Minister.
* After not having a quorum at the September Conference meeting, we, the conference council, approved the budget for 2021.
* We developed a Racial Equity Task Force to review our policies, procedures, and the ways that we are at work together and identify areas of growth for us. We anticipate a report from this group for CAG 2022.
* We received the notice of resignation of Jeremy Force, Executive Director of Camp MoVal.
* We made the difficult decision to close Camp MoVal for the 2021 season.
* We received the notice of resignation of Rev. Ginny Brown-Daniel, Conference Minister.
* We hired Rev. Mary Nelson to serve as our Transitional Conference Minister.
* We decided to enter a season of listening and discernment regarding the future of Camp MoVal.

I would like to take a moment to expand on that last point. We entered this year with the motion still on the table from CAG 2019 to sell the portion of MoVal known as T.A.M.B.O. When we were not able to discuss that at CAG 2020 due to needing to transition to a virtual format, we created a working group of the Conference Council, which we called the MoVal Task Force, to evaluate if that is still the motion that we want to leave on the table. In this group we worked closely with Jeremy Force, Executive Director of Camp MoVal, to gather data and ask questions. After much discussion and prayer, in February 2021, the MoVal Task Force recommended that we consider working toward the possibility of the sale of MoVal after a season of discerning together as a conference. The Conference Council chose to move forward with the listening and discernment part of the recommendation but NOT toward sale, but instead get our direction from the wider conference body. This season of listening and discernment is a substitution to the motion still on the floor about the sale of T.A.M.B.O. It is my sincere hope that you all will join us during the season of listening and discernment, to hear the ideas, hopes, dreams, and concerns of the Conference and to plan together what the future might hold for us as the Missouri Mid-South Conference.