**Conference Annual Gathering**

**April 25, 2020**

The 2020 Conference Annual Gathering was conducted by ZOOM video teleconference due to the mitigating situation of the COVID 19 pandemic. The original plans for meeting in Jefferson City at Central and Oasis churches had to be modified as was the original agenda (available on the Missouri Mid-South Conference web site – drop down menu - Events ‘CAG Materials’ ).

Associate Conference Minister candidate, Rev. Damien Lake gave the opening Devotional. An opening prayer and welcome was given by Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel.

Rev Donna Smith – Pupillo called the business meeting to order. She thanked the worship committee (Eric Moeller, Cindy Bumb, Damien Lake, Hannah Rice and Ginny Brown Daniel) for their diligence in generating and conducting a meaningful worship via ZOOM. Donna introduced the Conference Council executive committee – Andrea Asselmeier, vice moderator; David Rauch, treasurer; Leslie Kemp, secretary, and Grant Wiens, parliamentarian. Donna remembered the recently deceased Rev Dr David Beebe, long serving Conference parliamentarian.

A quorum was declared with 218 ZOOM participants (including visitors) and over 80 churches represented. A motion was offered by David Greenhaw and seconded by Jacquelyne Tyler to accept and adopt the meeting agenda and standing rules. The motion passed unanimously. A motion by David Greenhaw and seconded by David Poe for the adoption of new business rules introduction during 2021 CAG was also passed unanimously. An opening prayer was given by Rev Nicole Havelka. The minutes from the 2019 CAG were approved after motion by Kris Avis- Rouse and seconding by Ron Serino. Among the guests introduced by Ginny Brown Daniel were Michelle Scott Huffman, Paul Koch, Mark and Doug Dischinger, Daryl Shreiber, Deirdre Hainsworth, June Boutwell, and Char Burch. All visitors were granted voice without vote privilege during the business meeting.

**Treasurer’s Report**  David Rauch summarized documents available on the Conference web site, Events – 2020 CAG Materials, Section B- Financials. His report summarized the 2019 financial status of the Conference, Camp MoVal and the Shannondale Community Center. Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) receipts were $610,525 in 2019, exceeding the budget estimate of $583,188. Total Conference income was $672,265. Conference expenses were budgeted at $654,038 but the 2019 actual was $669,252, resulting in an excess of $3,013. MoVal’s revenues were $290,017 ($322,000 budgeted). MoVal expenses were $261,296 ($321,497 budgeted) resulting in an excess of $29,020. MoVal benefitted from an unbudgeted timber sale netting $33,791 during the year. Shannondale revenues totaled $197,110 ($189,608 budgeted) while their expenses were $188,810 ($189,607 budgeted). This resulted in a positive $8,300 balance. The total excess over the 2019 budget for the three entities was $40,333. The three sources of 2019 MMS income were shown and explained: OCWM - $610,525; Conference Reserve Fund Interest (4% draw of the 16 quarter average earning) - $37,212; Friends of the Conference - $16,566. David stated the Conference Council will likely have to revisit/revise the 2020 budget due to income uncertainties as a result of the pandemic and its stock market impact on Conference investments. The Conference Council will also need to present the 2021 proposed budget for approval at a subsequent Conference meeting.

David Rauch, Donna Smith-Pupillo and Ginny Brown Daniel answered budget questions from attendees:

Q. Was there income from carbon credit sales; if so, where does it show up?

A. Yes, the carbon credit legacy fund earnings are documented in the detailed revenue/budget report, which gives the actual amount. Ten percent of the earnings goes to the National Church, 10% to the Conference for the operating budget, 10 % to the Carbon Credit governing board for incidental expenses, and 70% goes to the Shannondale Community Center as part of their operating budget.

Q. Where does the Carbon Credit money go - MoVal and Shannondale?

A. United Church Funds manages the Carbon Credit legacy income, 70% of which goes to Shannondale.

Q. Is there a single unified budget for all parts of the Conference?

A. No, each entity (the Conference, MoVal and Shannondale) has its own budget which tracks and accounts for each entity’s income and expenses. But, the sums of revenues and expenses for each entity are combined to give a snapshot of the MMS financial status as a whole.

Q. Are these assumptions correct: The 2020 budget has the ACM cost built in for the six months of employment. Are those costs included in the 2021 Conference budget?

A. Yes, this is correct. The challenge will be to see how the church’s contributions are affected by the current situation. The 2020 budget may have to be adjusted by the Finance and Administration standing committee as well as the 2021 budget. Most of the future ACM cost is currently being spent on the three part time positions. These positions won’t be a part of the 2021 and future year budgets.

Q. How much was sent to the National Church in 2019?

A. Twenty percent of MMS OCWM receipts were sent to the National Church. This amounted to about $123,000. Camp MoVal receives 7.8% of OCWM receipts and Shannondale 5.9%.

Q. As income comes into the Conference, are MoVal and Shannondale funds kept in separate accounts or are they all in one fund? If Shannondale comes out ahead in one year, are the unused dollars available to them the next year?

A. There is one common MMS checking account, but revenues and expenditures are accounted for separately for each of the three entities. However, unused money from one year is not available to that entity the next year. For example, in 2017, a ‘good’ income year for MoVal, excess revenues at the end of the year were put into an MMS investment account.

Q. In light of financial uncertainty, the question of the viability of calling an ACM at this time was raised.

A. The conference is in a secure financial situation at this time with investments of over $2 million from which we draw on the earnings. Budgets will be reviewed and adjusted as needed. The salary package being developed is very comparable to that of the three part time staff employed today. ACM health insurance costs are yet to be determined.

Q. Has MMS applied for a loan under the Cares Act?

A. Yes, as a precaution against the uncertain financial time we’re in, an application for a loan under the Cares Act has been made with the help of the MMS bookkeeper firm.

Q. Will the revenues of Camp MoVal and Shannondale be sustained during the time of suspension of camp activities as a result of the pandemic?

A. Camp Directors are in conversation the Conference in efforts to remain viable. In an effort to remain safe during the pandemic, the camps will not open too soon. Prayer energy and financial support are encouraged. Camp expenses will be reduced by not hiring summer camp staff.

A motion to accept the Treasurer’s report subject to audit was made by Gilford Bisjak and seconded by Bill Brinkhorst. The motion passed unanimously.

**Leadership and Development Report.** Bill Biedenstein, chairperson of the standing committee presented the report. He thanked members of the committee for serving – Elaine Hudson, Western Association; Joyce Bathke, Eastern Association; Donna Smith – Pupillo, Conference Council Moderator and Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minister. The committee has been meeting bi-weekly since October. Bill introduced the slate of candidates for joining the Conference Council: Nancy Luehrman and Patty Wood to fill Council resignation vacancies (these did not require approval votes); Karen Watson and Max Bade, Eastern Association; Randy Hundley, Paul Emily and Elaine Tebbenkamp, Western Association; Bill Biedenstein (second term), Meredith Jackson and Karen Miller, St. Louis Association. The nominees for Conference Council Officers were Andrea Asselmeier, Moderator; Nancy Luehrman, Vice-Moderator; Sonya Vann, Secretary; and Michael Mueller, Treasurer. Kristin Aardema Faigh seconded the slate. The slate was approved by voice vote with no opposition or abstentions.

The slate for General Synod 2021 and 2023 was introduced: Nathan Fulk and Leslie Kemp, Eastern Association; Betsy Happel, Hannah Rice, James Ross, and Jimmy Watson, St. Louis Association. A youth candidate is yet to be identified. No Western Association delegates were nominated because of the objective to balance the slate geographically. Several WA delegates are currently serving for GS2021 and 2023, preserving geographic balance. A list of alternate delegates was also identified, in case elected delegates can not serve. Laura Dierberg Ayres seconded the slate of delegates. The slates was approved by voice vote with two abstentions.

**Associate Conference Committee Search Committee Report.** Hannah Rice, Search Committee Chair, reported on the process used to select a candidate. The committee was supported by Rev Lee Albertson, Conference Minister Search Coordinator from the National Office. Thirteen profiles were received after the job description was posted. The profiles were reviewed and six Zoom interviews were conducted. The committee then identified two individuals for face-to-face interviews. As a result, Reverend Damien Rice was selected for recommendation to the MMS Conference as our Associate Conference Minister. The two primary duties of the ACM will be Search and Call support and Committee on Ministry liaison.

After Rev Lake answered questions from meeting participants and a meeting extension motion was approved. A roll call vote of lay delegates, clergy and council members attending was taken. The vote tally was 184 ‘Yes’, 8 ‘Abstain’, 2 ‘No’. Rev Damien Lake was called to be Missouri Mid-South Associate Conference Minister.

**Announcements.**

Ginny Brown Daniel told of a follow-on June informal ZOOM meeting with a worship service, a celebration of church and clergy anniversaries, a litany of farewell for out-going staff, and the installation of new Conference Council members.

Jeremy Force told of the need, due to the pandemic, to keep Camp MoVal closed until at least 1 August and to see what could be done safely after 1 August.

Ginny Brown Daniel thanked the MMS churches, chaplains, clergy and staff for their innovative efforts during this time of pandemic. She also thanked Donna Smith-Pupillo for her leadership of the Conference Council during the past two years. A $250 gift is being made to the Deaconess Nurse Ministry in Donna’s name.

Donna Smith-Pupillo thanked the Conference Council and those going off the Council – David Rauch, Les Kemp and Cheryl Howard. Donna also thanked Conference staff, the CAG planning committee, Jane Fisler-Hoffman, Douglas Anders, and Nicole Havelka.

The closing prayer was given by Jane Fisler-Hoffman and Douglas Anders.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Kemp, Conference Council secretary