

**2012 Southern Ohio District Conference  
West Charleston Church of the Brethren**

**Friday, October 19, 2012**

Moderator Burt Wolf called the meeting to order. He welcomed the attendees and delegates, and led the opening prayer.

NOTE: All reports were on the district website: [www.sodcob.org](http://www.sodcob.org)

**Consecration of Delegates:** Moderator-Elect Julie Hostetter led the Consecration of Delegates.

**Adoption of the Agenda:** Moderator Wolf presented the agenda posted on the district website for adoption. The agenda was approved.

**Review of 2010 District Conference Minutes:** The minutes posted on the district website were approved.

**Affirmation of District Leadership Slate:** Ballots were distributed and Andrew Wright presented the slate. Julie Hostetter led the group in prayer. The ballots were returned.

**Outdoor Ministries Study Committee report:** Curt Ankeny, Art Fourman, Tammy McFadden, and Tony Price gave the report. They shared their process, findings, and recommendations on Friday night with a time for delegates to respond on Saturday. Options regarding the future of Outdoor Ministries/Programming in Southern Ohio were:

- A) Have age-specific and specialty programming year round, at whatever location best fits programming needs.
- B) Have age-specific and specialty programming during the summer with Men's and Women's Retreats at their normal times (status quo).

The committee felt that any decisions made at District Conference concerning Woodland Altars needed to be studied more deeply, which went beyond the scope of the committee. They believed that any recommendation chosen would need a feasibility study and that the District Board would have the responsibility to allocate funds for that study. Each option is listed below with the estimated costs of carrying out the recommended feasibility studies for that option.

- A) Keep Woodland Altars based upon the findings of a feasibility and marketing study. Approximate cost would be \$50,000 – \$100,000.
- B) Develop a partnership with an organization or individual to maintain the site. Approximate cost would be \$10,000 - \$50,000.
- C) Sell Woodland Altars and rent facilities as needed. Approximate cost would be \$10,000. The committee gave two further recommendations:
  - 1) The District Board should carry out any decisions concerning Outdoor Ministries programming and the use of Woodland Altars and that the District Board should appoint and provide funding for a neutral committee to collaborate with key current and former Outdoor Ministry leaders to investigate the parameters of developing and implementing the District Conference approved Outdoor Ministry program structure and the use of Woodland Altars facility.
  - 2) A report of action steps taken and recommendations for further actions should be presented to the 2013 District Conference.

**Result of Slate:** Moderator Wolf announced that the district slate was affirmed.

**Saturday, October 20, 2012**

Moderator Wolf called the business session to order. Nan Erbaugh led the gathered body in singing "Gentle Shepherd."

**Agenda:** Moderator Wolf presented the agenda for the business items. The agenda was accepted. Then he led the conference in prayer.

**Manchester University:** Will Patch (Senior Admissions counselor, Manchester University) presented Jane Plum (1974 Manchester College graduate) for approval as an at-large member of the Manchester University Board of Trustees. The conference affirmed Ms. Plum in this role. He also presented the Manchester University articles of restatement and by-laws for approval. The modified articles make all trustees at-large trustees, reduce the board's size, and pull representation from around the denomination (not specific districts). Changes to the code of bylaws state that the board include a minimum of 6 Church of the Brethren trustees and 6 alumni, the board committee structure be simplified, and the remaining board members be given more responsibility. The names, roles, and details of the committees would be reviewed every 5 years. The change to all at-large trustees would be phased in as the terms of current board members expire. The changes were approved.

**New Church Development Commission:** Ron Wenzel and the commission presented a skit about different ways to plant churches. Commission members shared that they are open to working with the methods of planting churches named in the skit and ones that may not have been.

**Denominational Report:** A video was shared about the 2013 Annual Conference and a bit about each of the agencies. Loyce Borgman (Brethren Benefit Trust) shared greetings on behalf of the four Annual Conference Agencies (Brethren Benefit Trust, On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, and the Church of the Brethren) and a presentation highlighting the ministries of each. Two people from Southern Ohio are currently serving in denominational leadership. Nancy Heishman is the moderator-elect for 2013 and Trent Smith serves on the Mission and Ministry Board.

**Gifts Discernment Commission:** Rhonda Scammahorn and Karen Garrett shared the report. They asked delegates to discern individuals and gifts that might benefit the district and to complete the call sheet (available in the delegate packet and on the district website). Mark Bowman (member of nominating committee for Standing Committee) explained the process of nominating someone to a denominational position. Burt and Helen Wolf (on-site coordinators for the 2014 Annual Conference in Columbus) made a request for volunteers to serve in Columbus.

**Outdoor Ministries Commission:** Gene Karn and John Kinsel used video, slide shows, and other sharing to tell delegates about the different ministries (summer camp, Men's Retreat, Women's Retreat, etc.) led by this commission.

**Outdoor Ministries Study Committee:** Members of this team led a discussion time regarding their findings and recommendations. Individuals were able to ask questions of clarification regarding the committee's findings and recommendations. They were also able to offer comments.

### **Saturday Afternoon**

**Outdoor Ministries Study Committee:** the discussion time continued after lunch. Larry Tyner led the delegates in prayer. Then ballots were distributed for marking and collected by the ushers. The results for the programming question were that 73% of people favored age-specific and specialty programming year round and 27% favored having age-specific and specialty programming during the summer with Men's and Women's Retreats at their normal times. The results for the question regarding Woodland Altars/Facilities Use were that 55% of people favored keeping Woodland Altars with a feasibility study, 24% favored developing a partnership to maintain the site, and 21% favored selling or renting the property.

**Disbanding the Wolf Creek Congregation:** Members of the Wolf Creek congregation contacted

Dave Shetler seeking approval to close their congregation due to declining membership. Julie Hostetter led the delegates in prayer for this congregation. Then Dave motioned that District Conference act on the request of the Wolf Creek congregation to disband, with the District Board to become the caretaker of the property. Delegates voted to support this motion.

**Brethren Retirement Community:** Report given by John Warner (President and CEO of Brethren Retirement Community). He brought greetings from the board, staff, and residents of BRC. He shared about BRC's budget and strategic partnerships and talked about the Manna Program through which the Bradford Area Association of Churches distributes leftover food from the BRC in the Bradford area. He shared that volunteers have given 19,400 hours of service to BRC. He concluded his remarks by saying that the Brethren Retirement Community was awarded "Best nursing home and assisted living" facility in Darke County and by talking about the BRC's new health and wellness program, "Senior Fit."

**Missional Renewal Commission:** Report given by Helen Wolf and Belinda Yingst. They shared that the goal of this commission is not to come up with answers to a congregation's problems, but to listen to stories, help members uncover gifts, and walk alongside congregations as they journey. Leaders from three district congregations shared stories of their work with this commission.

**Shared Ministries Commission:** Report given by Mindy Tipton and the commission. The District Youth Cabinet is working to revive youth ministries in Southern Ohio. Fliers about Autumn Annual were in the delegate packet. Brethren Disaster Ministries presented a slide show and thanked congregations for the many different ways they have contributed to this ministry. Empowering Disciples focuses on bringing learning opportunities to the district. On January 12 (New Carlisle) and February 9 (Eversole) there will be an event about finances with CEU's offered for some sessions. Registration forms are in the delegate packet. Brethren Helping Hands provides opportunities to serve locally providing labor assistance for repair and upgrades to primary residences.

**Ministerial Leadership Commission:** Report given by Sandra Jenkins. This commission works to assist congregations and ministers to best be in service together. They credential ministers: Dave Hummans, Ryan Pyles-Dodds, and Kimberly Martin were licensed to the ministry in 2012. The commission has been organizing a mentoring program for licensed persons, pairing them with ordained persons as they discern the next steps of their call. The commission also held an event called "Shoes of the Fisherman" that brought together individuals from various backgrounds to describe their callings. Andrew Wright explained how the district will be assisting pastors to earn their Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

***Recognition of Ordination Anniversaries – Congratulations!***

5 years: Lisa Baker, Roger Cruiser

10 years: Ty Pyles, Dan Denlinger

15 years: Greg Hyre, Mark Bowman, Robert Bitner, Ron McAdams, Shelia Shumaker

20 Years: Wuethener James

25 years Lee Clasper-Torch, Mark Gardner

30 Years: Philip Dell, Julie Hostetter, Jim Chronister

36 years: Mike Hostetter

45 years: Bruce Rosenberger, John Huffaker

50 years: Glenn Shively, Fred Bernhard

**Director of District Communications:** Mary Boone gave the report. Mary has been working at developing ways to share the energy and excitement brought by district commissions. The district has been relying primarily on electronic communications: the district website, an emailed newsletter, etc. Print news is also sent to congregations each month.

**District Executive:** David Shetler gave the report. He talked about the Spirit's work supporting local ministries throughout the Southern Ohio District. The District Conference, the District Board, district commissions, and district teams are all a part of that work. David expressed his thanks for the opportunity to serve with and among the people of Southern Ohio. He also highlighted the placements that occurred this year: Ty Pyles, Beavercreek; Roger Cruiser, Circleville; Trent Smith, Happy Corner; Juanita Yaezell and Brian Gilven, Mack Memorial; and Burt Wolf, Oakland.

**Treasurer's Report:** Susan Liller reported on financial reports available on the website. The district began 2012 with \$9227.70 in the General Fund. We drew on \$5000 of the reserve available to the General Fund and \$25,000 from the extended ministries funds to operate. As of District Conference, there was a loss of \$38,675 with a little over \$3000 available to spend. Timber funds and extended ministries funds were still available to spend, but the District Board would have to approve their use. Through the end of September, 2012, expenses were on target with the budget, but income was not.

**Resource Development Commission:** Carl Eubank presented the report. This commission finds resources to carry out district ministries through stewardship education, grants, donor development, etc. He named their three biggest accomplishments: 1. Board members visited the leadership teams of district churches, engaging them in conversations about district ministries and listening as churches shared about their ministries, 2. the district budget was formatted in a way similar to that used by the New Carlisle congregation, 3. an end of the year fund raising appeal letter was in the works.

**District Budget:** The 2013 budget was based on the giving pattern of the last several years. It showed a net loss of \$56,258. If the District does not receive increased donations from congregations or individuals, the District Board will need to use money from reserve funds to meet expenses. Resource Development also recommended considering a negative budget in 2014 to allow the momentum of giving to catch up with the excitement being generated by district ministries. If giving has not increased by the end of 2014, district leadership will need to further consider district ministries in Southern Ohio. The budget passed.

**Offering for District Ministries:** led by Nan Erbaugh.

### **Conference Wrap Up**

2012 Moderator Burt Wolf transferred leadership to 2013 Moderator Julie Hostetter and Moderator-Elect Tom Bowser.

Julie thanked Burt Wolf for his past, present, and future work in the district. The next conference is at the Trotwood Church of the Brethren on October 11th and 12th, 2013. The 2013 District Conference theme will be "For All of You are One in Christ Jesus."

The 158th Southern Ohio District Church of the Brethren District Conference adjourned.