

**Southern Ohio District Conference
October 9, 2015
Happy Corner Church of the Brethren**

Friday, October 9, 2014

Moderator Mark Bowman called us to order at 6:30 pm. Pastor Trent Smith (Happy Corner) welcomed conference-goers to Happy Corner.

NOTE: All reports were available on the District website: www.sodcob.org.

Introduction of Guests –Guests included Loyce Borgman (Brethren Benefit Trust), Karen Garrett (Brethren Life and Thought and Bethany Theological Seminary), Irv Heishman (On Earth Peace), Debbie Eisenbise and Stan Dueck (Congregational Life Ministries), Fred Bernhardt (Bethany Theological Seminary), John Warner (Brethren Retirement Community), and Jeremy Ashworth and John Neff (E3).

Seating of delegates and consecration: Moderator-elect Judy Boles led the consecration of delegates.

Presentation and Approval of the Agenda: Moderator Bowman presented the agenda for adoption. It was approved.

Review of District Conference Reports: The reports for the 2015 District Conference were accepted.

Review of District Conference Minutes: The minutes for the District Conference held on October 10-11, 2014 were approved with the correction “Maureen Tape” should be *Maureen Tayse*.

Affirmation of District Leadership Slate: Judy Boles presented the slate on behalf of the Gifts Discernment Team. Slates were distributed. Moderator Bowman led the group in prayer. The slates were returned.

Recognition of Pastors Anniversaries: Andrew Wright and Dave Shetler recognized ordination anniversaries. Congratulations!

5 years – Robert Raker

15 years – Nick Beam, Doug Donohoo, Ken Oren, Tony Price

20 years – Chester Hale, Mel Smith

30 years – Brent Driver, Nancy Heishman, Dan Ulrich, Jim Vandermark, Andrew Wright

35 years – Martin Peacock, Dave Shetler, Don Wagstaff

40 years – John Waite

50 years – Glenn Timmons, Charles Cupp, Mike Hodson

55 years – Dwayne Yost

60 years – Bill Kidwell

Introduction – Sale of the Camp

Ty Pyles, District Board Chair, presented a time line of the sale and the proposed offers on the property for delegates to consider. He noted that ballots for voting were in the delegate packets.

Introduction – 2016 Proposed Budget

Carl Eubank, Chair of the Resource Development Commission, presented the budget for delegates to consider.

Results of slate: Moderator Bowman shared that the District slate had been affirmed.

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Announcements

Adjournment for evening worship

Saturday Morning

Moderator Bowman called the business session to order.

Sale of Undeveloped Acreage to The Nature Conservancy

Ty Pyles presented the proposed offer, as outlined in the timeline document. On behalf of the District Board, he brought the motion *“that we sell the undeveloped timber land of the Adams County Property to the Nature Conservancy for \$3158 per acre.”* A time for discussion followed.

On behalf of Friends of Woodland Altars, Ken Oren moved to amend the recommendation to read, *“that the Southern Ohio District Board sell 265 acres of undeveloped timber land to the Nature Conservancy for \$3158 per acre and that 182 acres be leased to Friends of Woodland Altars LLC for the sum of \$1 per year with a renewable 10 year lease which allows Friends to make repairs to existing facilities, manage the pine forest, and develop non-wooded areas. The 182 acres includes buildings, ridge camps, pine forest, Strawberry Hill, and the farm up to the tree line.”* Moderator Bowman ruled this amendment as “amendment by substitution” and therefore out of order.

Irv Heishman (West Charleston) brought an amendment to the original motion that read, *“and that the proceeds from the sale be placed in an endowment, not a quasi endowment, for District ministries.”* Gary Crim, District Legal Counsel, noted that any money put in an endowment could be removed from an endowment by a later District Conference. After a time of discussion, a vote was taken. The amendment passed and became part of the main motion.

The motion as amended read, *“That we sell the undeveloped timber land of the Adams County Property to the Nature Conservancy for \$3158 per acre and that the proceeds from the sale be placed in an endowment, not a quasi endowment, for District ministries.”* This was followed by a time to discuss the motion as amended.

Action: After a prayer, the vote was taken by paper ballot, and collected and counted by agency representatives. The motion as amended carried. 81 yes, 12 no.

Sale of Developed Acreage to Thomas Partin

Ty Pyles presented the proposed offer, as outlined in the timeline document. On behalf of the District Board, he brought the motion *“that we sell the remaining 85 acres of the Adams County Property to Thomas Partin for \$300,000.”* A time for discussion and questions followed. It was clarified that Mr. Partin plans to use the property much the way it has been under our care. Mr. Partin and his business partner are willing to work with members of the District, as customers, to develop a camping program on the property. They have also asked permission to continue using the name “Woodland Altars.” Money from the sale will be put into four areas of ministry: 40% is to go into an endowment for empowering congregations to do mission in their communities, 20% for providing education to empower leadership, 20% for empowering emerging (new) ministries, and 20% to undergird existing ministries.

Action: After a time of prayer, the vote was taken by paper ballot, and collected and counted by agency representatives.

Saturday Afternoon

The motion *“that we sell the remaining 85 acres of the Adams County Property to Thomas Partin for \$300,000”* carried. 74 yes, 19 no.

DRAFT

Agency Reports

Fred Bernhardt (Bethany Theological Seminary) and Irv Heishman (On Earth Peace) gave the agency report. Irv shared that On Earth Peace is grounded in the New Testament and that next year's theme centers around Acts 10-15. Irv encouraged conference goers to study these chapters to discern a way forward in the midst of our differences. Fred shared that Bethany was named in the "2015 Class of Seminaries to Change the World." They strive to be agile to meet the needs and situations of students in today's world. They are committed to studying scripture in community. Conference goers can help the seminary in three ways: discerning those who might be called to ministry, supporting the seminary with resources, supporting it with prayers. A video highlighting agency ministries was also shared.

Continuing the reconciliation process for the District

Maureen Tayse (West Charleston) brought a motion from the West Charleston Leadership Team: *"To move the following tabled recommendation from 2014 onto the table: "The West Charleston Church of the Brethren recommends that the Southern Ohio District Conference affirm its support for the continuation of the professional reconciliation process led by KIPCOR (Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution affiliated with Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas), and provide the needed financing for it."*

Action: The motion carried. The West Charleston recommendation from 2014 was added as an item of business.

A time for discussing the West Charleston recommendation from 2014 followed.

Ben Kraus brought an amendment striking the words *"led by KIPCOR (Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution affiliated with Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas), and provide the needed financing for it"* with *"To be led by a highly skilled facilitator who has experience in successfully guiding networks of congregations in resolving complex conflicts. As necessary, proceeds from the sale of the Adams County Property may be used to cover the cost of this reconciliation process."*

A time for discussion and questions regarding the amendment followed. Concerns were raised over funding, whether the facilitator would be Christian, and what the process would include. A desire was expressed for having a professional mediator to help heal the rifts within our body.

Action on the amendment: The amendment passed. The recommendation from West Charleston was amended. It read: *"The West Charleston Church of the Brethren recommends that the Southern Ohio District Conference affirm its support for the continuation of the professional reconciliation process to be led by a highly skilled facilitator who has experience in successfully guiding networks of congregations in resolving complex conflicts. As necessary, proceeds from the sale of Adams County Property may be used to cover the cost of this reconciliation process."*

A time for a discussing the amended recommendation followed. The questions were raised: Why is this necessary? Why can't we solve the problem ourselves? and Why should the entire District be asked to help fund a mediator for part of the District? A desire was named wanting to have someone objective involved in the process to make sure everyone is heard.

Action on the amended recommendation: The motion passed. The amended recommendation was accepted.

2016 Budget

Carl Eubank presented the proposed District budget for 2016. As the District Board put this budget together, they considered the needs and wants of congregations and individuals and what level of support the Board will receive from congregations and individuals. In 2016, the Board will secure the

DRAFT

services of an individual or group who will help us move forward together as a District. From these conversations, the Board hopes to discern what ministries are important to the District, which ones are needed at a District level that are not presently being offered, and what level of support congregations will commit in 2017. The answers to these questions will help the Board as they develop the vision for 2017 that will be presented at next year's District Conference. The Board asks for one year to discern the needs and wants of the District. The Board recommends, for one year only, to use money from the sale of the developed Adams County property, as needed, to balance the 2016 budget. On behalf of the District Board, Carl Eubank brought the motion that *"District Conference affirm the budget as presented."*

A time for questions and discussion followed. In answer to questions that were raised, it was noted that the budget will need to be adjusted to cover the expenses of the conflict resolution approved by delegates. We will continue to have a Camping and Retreat commission because we will continue to have a camping program, even after the sale of the Adams County property. While the District has not reached full self-allocation amounts in previous years, the Resource Development Commission has taken into account congregational giving over the past ten years as well as verbal pledges of support. The Volunteer Expense line item (54054) did not carry over into the total column. The number in the bottom right-hand column should be \$2828. If the money needed to balance the budget does not come in, the District Board will make necessary cuts. The District Board feels they need one year to use money from the sale of Woodland Atlars to help fund current District ministries at the level they have been providing them and to allow time for discernment of future direction. There would be a one time, \$80,000 transfer. If funds were still needed after this transfer, the District Board would need to adjust spending further or transfer more funds.

Action: The motion passed.

Toward a 20/20 Vision

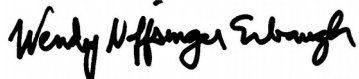
Neil Fitze suggested that the District and congregations sponsor up to three Syrian families (housing, jobs, transportation, clothing, etc.).

Moderator Bowman posed question how the District, might be able to move forward together. Responses included affirming the idea of helping with refugee resettlement, sharing resources from District Conference workshops on the District website, working on reconciliation within in the District before reaching out, and incorporating Love Feast at District Conference. Thanks was expressed for District Conference. The District was asked to consider having an event in the spring, like District Conference without business, that contain elements of Love Feast, worship, and workshops.

Conference Wrap Up

2015 Moderator Mark Bowman adjourned business of the 161st Southern Ohio District Church of the Brethren District Conference at 3:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Wendy Noffsinger Erbaugh
District Clerk**

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