



THE PROVINCIAL ELDERS' CONFERENCE

(EXECUTIVE BOARD)

1021 Center Street, P.O. Box 1245, Bethlehem, PA 18016-1245
Telephones: 610-867-7566 – Moravian Church Center
610-865-3137 – P.E.C. President
610-866-9223 – Fax

Eastern District President 610-865-0302

Western District President 608-837-0537

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH • Northern Province

Dear Church,

I greet you, dear church, in the name of Jesus, whose coming we await with anticipation during this season of Advent. I pray that as you worship on this journey of preparation and hope you will sense the comfort and challenge of the Holy Spirit who, with our Creator and Redeemer, sends us into God's world as witnesses of peace and joy.

Your provincial elders met November 19-20 in Bethlehem to listen to the Spirit and lead God's church. We organized our work around the areas of ministry developed in August.

Identity

1. We find our identity as beloved children of God, both called and sent. We celebrated one who has reminded us of our beloved identity as we rejoiced with Brother Jim Hicks on the 30th anniversary of his ordination. We gave thanks for his witness and ministry and offered prayers of joy for his family.

Care and Nurture of Leaders

1. In fulfillment of a synod resolution, we formed the Clergy Emergency Assistance Fund and are naming an advisory board of 5 people from across the province to identify criteria, guidelines, and a process to apply for available funds. This five-member board is charged by the PEC to offer tangible support to our clergy who experience a financial need due to a "disabling illness or injury... who need assistance providing for their food, shelter, and/or safety". (from synod resolution) We have received a gift of \$5,000 as seed money for this fund, and \$12,000 is included in the 2011 budget to support this caring ministry.
2. We met with seminarians who are under the care of the church through the candidacy process. Please pray for John Fritts, Lloyd Gooden, Charles Harewood, James Lavoy, Jennifer Moran, Mark Newman, Rhonda Robinson, and Rebecca Schoeneberger and other Moravians attending seminary but not currently candidates.
3. Approved the annual licensing of those serving under appointment to the church.
4. Approved a more equitable way to assess pension costs to bring into alignment those congregations that provide parsonages and those that provide a housing allowance. Our thanks go to Judy Kaaua, Tina Giesler, MaryAnn Hanas, Graham Kerslake and Gary Straughan for this work. Conference calls are scheduled for anyone who would like information on the revised calculation method. Watch for a letter explaining the details of this plan.

Human Sexuality

1. After prayerful deliberation, we developed a list of Task Force members to lead our province through this intersynodal period to "sponsor congregational forums... for the purpose of collaborative dialogue and prayer discernment" (from synod legislation). The PEC chose to limit this group to ten members

with the understanding that they could call on others to serve as resources for their ongoing work. Many more people wanted to serve than we could accommodate. If you wanted to serve and were not asked, please contact the chair and identify possible ways you could offer your expertise in a particular area. When the Task Force has been compiled, we will announce the members.

2. Since synod did not allocate funds for the work of this Task Force, we chose to allocate funds (in 2011) from the Minnie Uhde Fund which supports the continuing education of the laity. We welcome grants from individuals or congregations who feel led to fund the conversations and opportunities for dialogue across our province.
3. We ask that you join us in praying for the members of the Task Force and the work they are undertaking on behalf of us all.

Finance and Administration

1. We set the salaries for the support staff at 1021 Center Street with a 1.5% raise.
2. The lay members of PEC set the salaries for the clergy members. The salaries of the three full-time clergy (Dave Bennett, Jim Hicks, Betsy Miller) were reduced so that a Continuing Education line item could be restored for each of them. Steve Gohdes, who serves as pastor of Christ Church in Calgary and as president of the Canadian District, receives an annual stipend from the province to account for his time on PEC/District responsibilities.
3. We approved funding from the Congregational Development Fund (CDF) to partner with districts and in some cases congregations to enhance and enrich ministry at the congregational level.
4. Following a 12 month merger assessment, the newly formed MorningStar congregation in Coopersburg, PA received proceeds from the sale of the Grace Center Valley (PA) facility. It should be noted that following an assessment for merger and upon a recommendation by the District Board, the PEC can approve the allocation of congregational assets to the newly formed church. This differs from a church closure, in which the proceeds go to the Congregational Development Fund. This fund supports both new church plants and the redevelopment of existing congregations.
5. We purchased a parsonage for the PEC president in a residential neighborhood not on the Moravian College campus or historic church district. A designated parsonage fund, which was built up from past sales of Provincially-owned parsonages, will be used to pay for this three-bedroom ranch home with lower utility and maintenance costs than the current parsonage.
6. The property at 45 W. Church St., currently designated as a parsonage for the PEC president, is an historic building on Church Street, adjacent to and in front of college dormitories. It is a large home, with extensive maintenance needs, and has been rented to a family. The property at 49 W. Church St. was the former Mission House, used to house foreign missionaries home on furlough. This property contains two apartments that have been rented to non-Moravian parties for over fifteen years. The PEC made the decision to sell the properties at 45 and 49 W. Church Street and is actively pursuing that; we hope to sell them to an entity within the Moravian 'family.' We thank Wilton Grannum, PEC member, for his diligent work in all our property transactions.

Healthy Congregations

1. We noted that congregations and districts across the province are using the model of Healthy Congregations to become more attentive to their life and health. The Western District has been in an

intentional time of discernment around this matter. We encourage you to use the resources from synod and contact Betsy in the provincial office if you want more information.

Restructure

1. We began a conversation around the synod legislation of restructure and will invite consultants to a PEC meeting in early 2011 as we seek to consider our structure based on our understanding of God and our identity as people of God.

Relationship with Others

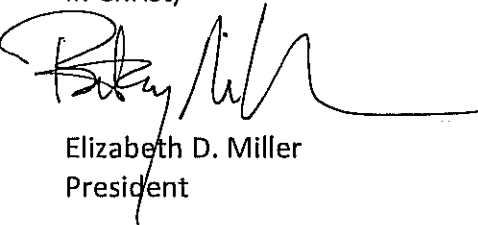
1. We are naming a team to work with the Southern Province on the Moravian-United Methodist Dialogue. We are grateful for Gary Harke's willingness to head up this team.

Things we are still working on

1. Hospitality at 1021 Center St. I am still looking for a volunteer coordinator from the Lehigh Valley area to organize a cadre of friendly, welcoming people to greet visitors to the Church Center.
2. Web page, blog, and other forms of electronic communication, both internally and for those seeking to learn about the Moravians. Mike Riess and the IBOC are leading our efforts to create a uniform 'look' across all websites.

As always, I thank God for all the staff at the Church Center and across our province, who work together to serve you and our congregations. We all participate in God's mission through our own particular gifts. Each church offers a unique gift that enriches the whole; each pastor and each staff member offers gifts that build up the Body of Christ. When we celebrate our part in the whole we glorify God and offer a powerful witness to the world. Thank you for the important role you play in our common ministry and in the work God calls you to in your local context. May God's Spirit guide you as we walk this Advent journey toward the manger and the overwhelming joy of welcoming Immanuel, God with us.

In Christ,



Elizabeth D. Miller
President

EDM:glr
December 1, 2010