

Report on Ohio Conference Year of Covenant

History of Year of Covenant

- At the spring cluster meetings and in preparation for Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) 2016, the Ohio Conference Leadership Team presented plans for a Year of Covenant for the Ohio Conference.
- Many congregations processed the invitation to intentionally enter the Year of Covenant. In total, 27 out of 56 congregations officially signed on to the Year of Covenant.
- Following the Annual Conference Assembly in March, 2016, the Ohio Conference Leadership Team invited George O'Reilly to give leadership to the Year of Covenant.
 - The stated purpose of the Year of Covenant was to "arrive at a place of deeply relational and focusing commitment to one another around shared values and in pursuit of an inspiring purpose as congregations of Ohio Conference."
 - Priorities for George's work included:
 - ✓ Arrange four meetings for pastors
 - ✓ Assist congregations with individual/regional gatherings for discussions on:
 - Practicing right relationships
 - Implementing the Year of Mission
 - How to be a discerning body
- George O'Reilly invited several from the Ohio Conference to join in helping plan the Year of Covenant activities: Marilyn Grasse-Brubaker, Dan Hooley, Rod Miller, Meagan Troyer, and Myron Weaver. Alysa Short also provided logistical support to this group and to the events.
- After Year of Covenant Meeting #2, and upon George's O'Reilly's departure from Ohio Conference staff, the Leadership Team invited Cliff Brubaker to give continuing leadership to the Year of Covenant.

Year of Covenant meetings for pastors

- Year of Covenant Meeting #1 May 11, 2016 Sharon Mennonite Church
 - Theme: Growing Together in Spirit and in Truth
 - Speaker: David Boshart, conference minister for Great Plains Mennonite Conference and moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA
 - Presentations: a) Covenant Commitments for Common Life; b) Character of Mennonite Confessions of Faith; c) Discernment in Times of Ambiguity and Impasse.
- Year of Covenant Meeting #2 Sept. 28, 2016 Maple Grove Mennonite Church
 - Theme: The Mission of God and the Continuing Conversion of the Church
 - David Miller, Associate Professor of Missional Church Leadership Development, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
 - Presentations:
 - ✓ Focusing on Genesis 12:1-3, the church continues to be part of the blessing extended to Abraham, particularly noting that God's people will be a blessing, and that all peoples of the earth will be blessed through God's people.
 - ✓ Focusing on Acts 10:1-35, Peter is confronted by the narrowness of his own vision and recognizes a new people that God is creating.
 - ✓ Focusing on Acts 15:1-21, the new church struggles to come to terms with what must be preserved and what is changing in the unfolding purposes of God.
- Year of Covenant Meeting #3 Feb. 2, 2017 Toledo Mennonite Church
 - Theme: Committing to Relationships That Honor the Prince of Peace

- Key questions for conversation and reflection for participants
 - ✓ What have we observed about and learned from our behaviors that have sustained good relationships and led to strained relationships?
 - ✓ What have we carried individually from our meetings that we may need to lay down to allow us to open a new chapter of the Ohio Conference story?
 - ✓ What resources do we have in our past and in our work together this year than can help us build a new covenant together?

Future

At its Jan. 21, 2017, meeting, the Leadership Team began plans to ask several people to explore ways in which the work begun this past year can be consolidated and then incorporated with the work done by the Year of Mission to build a plan for our covenant and mission in the future. More information should be available in preparation for the 2017 Annual Conference Assembly.

--Cliff Brubaker, Year of Covenant coordinator