

**Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA  
Credentialing Ministry Team  
Ohio Conference Office, Kidron, Ohio  
April 30, 2019**

**Present:** Dick Barrett, Verle Brubaker, Doug King, Andy Stoner, Vickie Yoder, LaVerne Yousey, Miriam Zehr, Judy King (recorder)

1. **Devotions.** Andy shared some reflections on Matthew 13: 47-52 and Isaiah 43:18-19, which speaks of old and new treasures. The Jews thought very highly of themselves. They represent the "old." The Anabaptist heritage is full of old treasures such as commitment to God superseding loyalty to country, being willing to die for their beliefs, separation from the world, sense of community, the emphasis on discipleship, knowledge of the Bible, and dedication to missions. What will the new treasures be? The kingdom of heaven includes more than just the Jews. It includes everyone. Jesus modeled what it was to accept everyone. Hospitality used to be practiced more. It is one of the ways we can show our acceptance of others, a way of including rather than excluding. We need to find ways of being more invitational. God's kingdom is dynamic. It is growing. It isn't static. Are we seeing the new things that God wants us to be doing? Our young new pastors are coming from outside the Anabaptist tradition. They have chosen it. They are bringing new insight. God's kingdom is flexible, not rigid. We need to be willing to change. Jesus blessed the old things and the new things. Andy led in prayer.
2. **Minutes.** The minutes from the Jan. 8, 2019, meeting were approved as presented.
3. **Sharing.** As a way of introduction, Andy asked each person to share a high and low moment of career or life experience.
4. **Misconduct cases review.** The misconduct cases from the last two years were reviewed. Our pastors need to be aware that the new denominational misconduct policy outlines a judicial process, not a restorative one. Dick reported that every misconduct file is now on record in both the Conference office and in the denominational office. With this information available, both Mennonite Church USA and the regional pastors should be able to flag any potential candidates with misconduct in their past.
5. **Pastor-Spouse Retreat.** Dick reported that the biennial pastor-spouse retreat is scheduled for Nov. 15-17, 2019, at Yellow Springs, Ohio. It will be limited to 28 couples. Brochures should soon be available.
6. **Overview of credentialing process.** With new members on the Credentialing Ministry Team (CMT) this year, the credentialing process was reviewed. The congregations call for credentialing, and the regional pastor recommends the pastor to CMT for an interview. The regional pastor walks the candidate through the credentialing process, making sure all documents are submitted in a timely manner. During the interview, the CMT has a list of competencies that they ask about. If there are any gaps, recommendations are made for things to do or read during the licensing period. In most cases, the candidate knows the decision of the CMT that day and the team offers a prayer of blessing. They are connected with a mentor and strongly encouraged to engage with a pastor peer group. The licensing period is a time of learning, growing and discerning.
7. **Scholarship application.** The Credentialing Ministry Team received and approved a scholarship application.
8. **Pastor Assessment Process.** Andy explained that Shalom Counseling and Mediation Center in Archbold and SpringHaven Counseling Center in Mt. Eaton are the two entities that give the assessments. There is a follow-up visit between the pastor taking the assessment and the counselor to go over the results. The results are then to be shared with the conference minister and the regional pastor only. Based on the results of the assessment, it is recommended that the pastor meet with the regional pastor and conference minister to work on a growth plan as a helpful tool to address any areas that were flagged. The mentor may also be a person to tap to help develop a growth plan. Prior to an ordination interview, the CMT should receive a summary of how that work is going. It was noted that ideally, every pastor should have a growth plan! The regional pastor and the mentor would be the persons to hold the pastors to accountability regarding their growth plans. Dick will write up a protocol to be shared with pastors taking the assessment, the regional pastors and CMT.

9. **Healthy Boundaries Training.** Andy reported that the training was well received. We have several pastors that have not yet completed this required training. Those pastors that do not comply with the required training will have their credentials suspended for a period of time, allowing time to participate in a scheduled training session. A letter of explanation will be written and sent to the pastors and their leadership teams. For new pastors coming in, we need to provide opportunities for their initial training. As in previous trainings, others from their congregations will also be invited to attend with them. We will aim to provide a training opportunity in January or February 2020. We will touch base with other area conferences to coordinate a joint training session, if possible. We will also check with other conferences to see if any other training opportunities are being scheduled in their conferences. We will check with Central District Conference (CDC), Indiana-Michigan, Allegheny and New York conferences. In 2021, it will be time to provide a refresher course for all of our pastors. This training might possibly be offered prior to ACA 2021.
10. **Journey program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).** We have been asked to consider becoming a sponsoring conference of the Journey program offered through AMBS. The official title is "Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program." Presently, CDC and Indiana-Michigan are the two sponsoring conferences, but we have Ohio Conference persons participating in the program. As a sponsoring conference, our conference minister sits on the Journey board and participates in the twice-yearly retreats. It will decrease the costs for our participants. Our only cost is to cover the expenses of the conference minister at the retreats. It is described as "a certificate program developing leaders centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities." Miriam gave a brief overview of the program. It is a great opportunity for lay persons to explore leadership. We can never offer too many options. The Leadership Team approved our participation in this program.
11. **Ordination Frakturs.** Jeff Hochstetler had his ordination certificate made into a fraktur and paid for the scanning and printing costs for the template and 10 copies of the fraktur. He has made those items available to Ohio Conference if we would like to use them. The cost of scanning and printing was \$108. We approved reimbursing Jeff Hochstetler for the costs involved and will offer frakturs to our pastors upon ordination.
12. **Next meeting.** The next meeting was scheduled for July 16, 2019, at 10 a.m. at Oak Grove Mennonite, West Liberty.
13. **Thanks** were expressed to Andy Stoner for his faithful leadership and guiding us through the past several years as chair of the Credentialing Ministry Team.

Judy King, recorder