

**Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA
Credentialing Ministry Team
Zoom meeting
April 7, 2021**

Present: Dee Custar, Doug King, Myron Weaver, Vickie Yoder (chair), LaVerne Yousey, Judy King (recorder)

Absent: Dick Barrett

1. **Devotions/prayer.** Vickie opened the meeting with a devotional by Marjorie Thompson titled "Soul Feast," focused on Jesus meeting us in the place of our spiritual seeking. Vickie led in prayer.
2. **Introductions.** Vickie reviewed the makeup of the Credentialing Ministry team members and explained that regional pastors participate when they have candidates interviewing or when there are topics for which they are invited for their input.
3. **Minutes.** The minutes of the Jan. 6, 2021, meeting were approved as presented.
4. **Reflections/Suggestions.** Team members were asked to reflect on positive and/or negative experiences they have experienced as they have served on this team. Although there were some bumpy periods as we worked our way through a misconduct case when we were using the newly revised misconduct policy for the first time, the overall experience has been very positive. There has been joy and excitement for new (sometimes newly Anabaptist) pastors coming into the Conference. It was noted that Zoom meetings have been necessary and are okay for regular business, but there is a desire to meet again in person when there is a candidate to be interviewed. LaVerne Yousey reviewed the scholarship program available from Credentialing Ministry.
5. **Updated information for Credentialing Ministry Team members.** Vickie shared the following:
 - The new Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) forms are centered around six core competencies: 1) Biblical Story 2) Anabaptist/Mennonite Principles 3) Christian Spirituality/Discipleship 4) Self Understanding and Self Awareness 5) Contextual Awareness and Missional Leadership and 6) Leadership. Vickie will send the core competencies to everyone.
 - Pastor Peer groups. Pastoral candidates are and will continue to be encouraged to participate in their local pastor peer group.
 - Mentors are assigned to newly licensed pastors by the regional pastor and continue to work with them until their ordination. Once ordained, we encourage pastors to meet with a spiritual advisor. We were reminded that SpringHaven Counseling Center (Mt. Eaton) offers three free counseling sessions to pastors per year. Shalom Counseling and Mediation Center (Archbold) offers six free counseling sessions to pastors and gives a 50 percent discount after that.
 - Interview questions. Vickie has not been assigning specific questions ahead of credentialing interviews. It is important to let the Holy Spirit lead and guide the questions during the interview. We may consider revising the suggested questions to fall more in line with the six core competencies.
 - We are responsible for those persons that have been credentialed by this team. Following Mennonite Church USA recommendations, Ohio Conference requires all credentialed pastors (optional for retired pastors) to take Healthy Boundaries training. We have several persons that have not yet taken any Healthy Boundaries training. We have tried to engage these folks over the course of several years. **The next step will be to suspend the credentials of these persons until they receive Healthy Boundaries training. It was suggested that the suspension be for a set period of time, and if training has not occurred during that time, their credentials will be terminated. Vickie will prepare a draft letter to be sent to these individuals and send it to the conference minister, the regional pastors and the Credentialing Ministry Team for input.**
 - Code of Ethics forms for credentialed pastors. In the last year, a new Code of Ethics for Credentialed Ministers was adopted, and each pastor has been asked to sign it and submit it. There are a number of pastors that have not yet signed the form. **Vickie will check with the conference minister and regional pastors to see how many are outstanding. It may require some phone calls on the part of the Credentialing Ministry Team members to follow up with those that have not yet submitted a signed form.**
 - Journey program. Doug is the Ohio Conference representative sitting on the board of the Journey program (from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary), along with Dick Barrett. Doug reported that we just graduated one Ohio Conference participant at Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) and

have one other participant currently in the program. There are others that may be interested. The next round of the program begins in the fall. Let Dick know of persons that may be a good fit for this program.

6. **Case Study.** Vickie sent a link to a previous sexual misconduct case in another area conference to give us an awareness of what happened and to consider how we might respond in a similar situation. The case involved a situation that occurred prior to the issuance of the 2016 *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure*, which was issued by the denomination and adopted by Ohio Conference. It was determined that we will follow the 2016 *Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure* for any cases that are brought to our attention, even if the misconduct occurred prior to 2016.
7. **Next meeting:** The next meeting will be scheduled for sometime in May, depending on schedules. We are expecting to have some interviews for that meeting and tentatively plan to meet in person.
8. **Closing.** Myron closed the meeting with prayer.

Judy King, recorder