**Illinois Mennonite Conference**

  **Annual Assembly Minutes**

 March 6, 2021 via Zoom

IMC delegates attended the IMC Assembly via Zoom on Saturday, March 6 2021. Fifty-eight persons from 12 churches were registered. Bharat Patel from First Mennonite Church, Champaign-Urbana smoothly operated the virtual meeting logistics.

**Morning session**

Charlotte Lehman and Anne Munley led worship in scripture, prayers, and songs. The scripture focus for worship and the day’s gathering was I Peter 4:7-11. “Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.”

Joe Liechty, former Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation professor at Goshen College and currently a facilitator with the Colossian Forum, led a morning session outlining practices to help navigate polarized issues.

David Miller and Jewel Gingerich Longenecker recognized Joleen Miller for completion of the Journey Program. Journey is a resource from AMBS Church Leadership Center available to any church leader for additional leadership training.

David Miller introduced Olak Sunuwar and his ministry to Nepali pastors in the Midwest and even Nepal. Pastor Olak addressed the meeting and explained the work with Nepali church leaders. A proposal to partner with Nepali Mission Outreach by supplying $1,000/month for the next year was considered after lunch.

During the lunch break, everyone enjoyed live music from Al and Andi Tauber from North Suburban.

**Afternoon session**

The afternoon began with a video collage of pictures of church life in IMC congregations over the last year, accompanied by a recording of youth singing from Mennonite Church of Normal.

Eric Frye Martin brought greetings from Mennonite Mission Network. He thanked IMC congregations for their continuing support and highlighted the service of some of the individuals from Illinois conference.

**Finances** - Darrel Miller reported 2020’s finances and 2021’s projected spending plan from the MLT. Because of covid restrictions, meeting and travel expenses were much reduced. Spending was $11,000 less than projected. Giving to IMC from the congregations was lower than the previous year. There was a $30,000 year-end surplus.

The 2021 Spending Plan moved Associate Conference Minister, Martin Navarro, from 1/8 time to 1/4

time. Martin’s work has surpassed his 1/8 time-status for a couple years. Leadership supports Martin in “shepherding” the relationships between the Hispanic and Anglo churches.

ACTION 1: approved the 2021 Spending Plan as presented.

ACTION 2: Delegates approved supporting the Nepali Mission Outreach with $1000/month for the next twelve months. IMC’s commitment to this ministry will be reviewed at the next IMC Assembly.

**Gifts Discernment** - Not long after Darrel Miller and Carol Bohnert, Gifts Discernment chair, talked about candidates for leadership positions in early December, Carol became seriously ill and was hospitalized. Carol ended her days on this earth twelve days prior to the assembly meeting. We praise God for Carol’s faith and personal devotion that she shared with everyone in Illinois conference and beyond.

 Even though MLT had stepped in to help Kurt Walker, the remaining Gifts Discernment member, there are still positions without people. Kurt has agreed to keep working beyond his term with MLT to recruit people for these positions until Gifts Discernment vacancies are filled. ACTION 3: Eric Nafziger was approved for a three-year term on MLT.

During an open Question and Answer time, three individuals expressed a need for more communication about what is happening in the conference. Darrel noted that all established forms of communication from the conference disappeared when Holly and Michael departed and the office was closed. There were suggestions that funds could be used to maintain better communication.

Joe Leichty, in an afternoon session, outlined practices that build bridges in settings where polarization makes dialogue difficult.

Anne Munley led a closing communion observance. David Miller closed in prayer.

Minutes from MLT