**IMC’s Discernment Around Same Sex Marriage and Credentialing**

Three Year Overview

2020 - After the 2020 meeting (and its Resolution to conduct interchurch dialogues), conference minister David Miller heard from more than one pastor that it is good to slow down addressing this question on credentialing. After fruitlessly waiting for Covid to disappear, we realized the world was going to operate by zoom and finally held some introductory zoom workshops using Colossian Way led by Joe Liechty that fall.

2021 - Leadership hoped framing the issue around mutual forbearance would help our process and shared a document to that effect at the annual meeting (still on the IMC website under *Resources*). At that March 2021 zoom assembly Joe Liechty led us through possible approaches to conversations around same sex marriage/credentialing.

Following that annual meeting, leadership brainstormed all the options for credentialing we could think of. (A version of that was offered at the 2022 annual assembly.) CLT worked with Joe Liechty to offer two sample Colossian Way sessions in early May (zoom).No churches immediately opted to engage with the Colossian Way process. Later that summer CLT worked at canvasing as many pastors as they could to hear about their congregations and to hear what level of interest there was in IMC’s credentialing question.

2022 – We shared the options for credentialing resource at the 2022 annual assembly. Since MCUSA had announced the Repentance and Transformation resolution would be considered at the Special Assembly in May, we paused those things related to IMC’s process so churches who wanted to engage their congregations with the upcoming Assembly wouldn’t be distracted by IMC’s process. We offered a resource for churches that wanted to engage the Repentance and Transformation Resolution.

Leadership met after the Kansas City meeting. The sentiment emerged that before a general open meeting for churchwide dialogue, a retreat for pastors to get away and share about their church’s current context would be good. We were pleasantly surprised that Malinda Berry (AMBS professor and speaker at Kansas City) was able to direct a day-retreat for pastors at Menno Haven in August. In person/zoom meetings for dialogue around IMC credentialing were held at Roanoke in November and Lombard in January.

**Going Forward**

We expect at least another round of Day of Discernment type gatherings and hope to discuss concrete options for credentialing. We are not discussing credentialing options at the annual meeting. This is an effort to get better attendance at the annual meeting…..to give some confidence in how the meeting will go.

We plan to follow up these meetings with canvasing IMC churches. The specifics of this canvasing are not decided, but the surest way to hear from each congregation is to talk to them individually.

Joe Liechty had suggested we see our process as Dialogue, Deliberation, and Decision. We hope to move more into a deliberation mode before a decision mode…..though our dialogue never ends.