

## Sessions Action Team Minutes

Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (MAC)

122 W. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55404

August 3, 2017

9:00 am – 11:00 am

**Present:** Rev. Marianne Ozanne, Sessions co-leader; Rev. Carol Zaagsma, Sessions co-leader; Bishop Bruce Ough; Rev. Cindy Gregorson, MAC Director of Ministries; Barb Brower, MAC Treasurer and Finance; Gail Johnson, MAC Events Coordinator; Christa Meland, MAC Director of Communications; Karla Hovde, MAC Communications Specialist; Dave Nuckols, MAC Co-Lay Leader; Rev. Paula Colten, Sessions Worship Leader; Janet Beard, MAC Conference Secretary; Laura Miles, MAC Office and IT Coordinator; and Deltry Coles, MAC Administrative Assistant. Michelle Behsman, Administrative Assistant.

**1) Devotions and Introductions** - Carol Zaagsma opened at 9:01 am with devotions based on Sally Howell Johnson's "What We Weave" reflection in *The Practicing Life*, p. 269-270. Bob Kutter's departure as MAC Co-Lay Leader was noted, while Dave Nuckols was welcomed as he fills that role.

### **2) 2017 MAC Review (Theme was Acts 2...Encounter the Spirit: Live Expectantly)**

#### **a) Survey Feedback**

- i) Gail Johnson prepared two documents that contained feedback received from the post-conference survey: "2017 Evaluation Recap" which represented 338 responses (53 from first time attenders, 161 clergy, 146 laity, 19 visitors, and 10 workers/volunteers); and "2017 First-Time Attendees Evaluations" which represented 55 self-identified first-time attendees in the post-conference survey.
- ii) General feedback is as follows: Bishop Ough's Episcopal Address was a big hit; as was the teaching by Junius B. Dotson; Dave Nuckols' presentation in the Laity Session; and the District Lunches. Acts 2 talks were also well-received; but a number wished they were spread out throughout the conference. The Celebration of Life in Ministry felt long to some folks (although it was noted that it ran over only 15 minutes beyond what was anticipated). Feedback about inclusive language and lack of diversity in music were also noted.
- iii) We asked Gail Johnson for a summary of age breakdowns of last several Annual Conference Registrants to help assess whether or not the later AC Session dates are resulting in younger attendees.

#### **b) Additional thoughts/feedback**

- i) District Superintendents really value District Days and Lunches. Get Engaged Workshops were hit or miss. We could take more control over topics offered. It was an opportunity for people to present information without being on the main stage, which is helpful to the flow of Annual Conference Session. Next time consider having a "host" for each room or two to count participants and keep the presentation on schedule (10-minute warning).

#### **c) Budget**

- i) It looks like we're coming out close. There are some bills that haven't been paid yet. It was noted that changing of rooms is not a savings factor due to switch-overs of set-up needed in short timeframe for Celebration of Life in Ministry service.

### **3) 2018 Annual Conference initial planning (Wednesday, May 30-Friday, June 1, 2018)**

#### **a) 2018 Theme (Grow...Discover Joy: Live Deeply!)**

- i) Focus Scripture is John 15:1-17 ("I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower...Abide in me as I abide in you."). It was noted we must move away from the park this year due to the earlier dates in the season and unpredictability of the weather. Carrie Newcomer has been

booked by Cindy Gregorson, while an eye toward a creative evening with possible poetry slam could be a nice way to spend the evening instead of in the park. Cindy is convening a Think Tank for brainstorming August 23 at 10:00 am and will report at our meeting in September. There was also extended conversation about possibly moving the Celebration of Life and Ministry to Friday afternoon.

- ii) It was noted that the 2019 Theme is *Reach...Dare to Disciple: Live Boldly* (June 18-20). The 2020 Theme is *Heal...Be the Light: Live Hope!* (June 23-25)

**b) Big Components (Room orientation; merged spaces; TED-Style Talks)**

- i) Room set-up decisions will need to follow after we have a better sense of the schedule.
- ii) Bishop Ough shared the intention of the Minnesota Annual Conference and Newport UMC to return the Red Rock to the Dakota in September 2018. Consider a worshipful experience for 1 ½-2 hours that may be part education and part celebration to help prepare and education on the need for this act of healing and reconciliation. It was noted that 2018 is the 100<sup>th</sup> year of Red Rock Camping Association; and a question was raised about potentially including this project as part of the 2018 Mission Offering.

**c) Additional Considerations**

- i) Commission on A Way Forward – Final recommendations of the Commission are due to the Council of Bishops 2 weeks before 2018 Annual Conference Session. Since what will be proposed will be public information, consider open space dialogue, respectful conversations, or another formal way to engage attendees, with the outcome being to inform the Minnesota Delegation.
- ii) Consider joint MN/Dakotas Annual Conference in 2020 – There was enthusiasm from many on this idea. Words of caution were offered around the timing (with Special Session in 2019 and General Conference 2020, will a new venue with many new people be more unsettling than it is worth for this particular year), around the messaging (combating the unspoken assumption that this means the Dakotas-MN conferences are merging), and around the logistics (let’s not underestimate the value of how well we know our venue and how valuable that is in a year when we’re also hosting General Conference 2020 and using many resources for that).
- iii) Christa Meland explained the 3-year contract with Good News TV is now up. Through consensus, Christa was authorized to renegotiate the contract without binding us for 2020, in case we proceed with a joint Annual Conference Session with the Dakotas Conference.
- iv) The “2018 Annual Conference Communications Deadlines” schedule was distributed. It was noted that deadlines are earlier this year due to the earlier Annual Conference Session dates.

**4) 2017-2018 Sessions Action Team meeting schedule (at 122 W. Franklin)**

- Thursday, November 2, 2017 from 10am -12 noon
- Thursday, February 1, 2018 from 10am -12 noon
- Wednesday, April 4, 2017 from 10am -12 noon
- Monday, June 18, 2018 from 10am-12 noon for recap/debrief

**5) Closing/set initial agenda for next meeting** – Hear report from the Think Tank; Consider how big building blocks are fitting together (Returning the Red Rock; Commission on A Way Forward); and discuss whether or not we need worship in a separate space.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Zaagsma, Acting Recorder