

**Annual Conference Sessions Team
Meeting Minutes
June 18, 10:00am**

Present – Carol Zaagsma, Sessions co-leader; Cindy Gregorson, Director of Ministries; Barb Brower, Director of Finance & Administration; Christa Meland, Director of Communications; Karla Hovde, Communications Specialist; Gail Johnson, Events Coordinator; Rachael Warner, new Sessions Worship Co-Leader; Janet Beard, Conference Secretary (via phone); Laura Miles, Technology Coordinator; Bishop Bruce Ough; Dave Nuckols, Conference Lay Leader.

Devotions – Carol led us in devotions. She used quicksand and Mr. Rogers as illustrations of the importance of slowing and quieting our busy-ness in order to deepen our spirituality and calm our spirits. She mentioned that the agenda today is quite ambitious and encouraged all to take time and slow down to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance and learn God's direction for the upcoming two annual conferences. Carol opened the meeting in prayer.

2018 Review (Grow...Discover Joy: Live Deeply!)

1. Survey Feedback: Gail shared results from 305 surveys, 44 of which were submitted by first time attenders.

- *Overall, the surveys conveyed overwhelmingly positive feedback.

- *Tyler Sit's conference preacher message was a big highlight.

- *Responses indicate that TED-style talks are appreciated and should continue.

- *Sketchbook – those who used it loved it, but some didn't know what to do with it.

- *Responses indicate that more time for table talk may be appreciated.

- *A suggestion was made for people up front to identify themselves, even during worship. Discussion yielded the idea to put names in corner of powerpoint slide as new participants lead at the microphone.

- *There was long discussion concerning the CL&M worship including the following topics: lighting; screens; tables; timing; one room vs. two rooms (using Carlson for worship, Hawes for business); quality of live-stream; coffee; creed, liturgy, music and inclusive language; not as many people coming forward this year for the call to ministry at the end.

- *Some comments indicated that the videos weren't inclusive regarding the people shown.

- *Discussion occurred around the impact of the daily wrap-up videos. It was decided that these helped build energy for each day, were very well done, and there were many views and shares on social media following AC that indicated they were well-used. It was suggested that we ask the videographer to hold the dates for next year and confirm with him as planning progresses. It was mentioned that it would be helpful to inform clergy that the final video will be available the Sunday following AC, so they can plan ahead to show it at worship.

It was decided to resume discussion about specific plans for 2019 regarding rooms and set up, screens, lighting, etc. at the next meeting, to allow time for Gail to get information concerning costs and feasibility of some of the ideas discussed.

A new inclusive language policy was agreed upon: *The goal during Annual Conference planning will be to keep language generous and inclusive in liturgy and message, to choose music that offers the best language and theology for the theme, and, when appropriate, to maintain historic language when incorporating creeds or other historic writings.*

2. Did we meet our outcomes:

- *Emphasis on the theme was good.

*Theme videos not as effective this year; not bad, but didn't set the tone. Suggestion for next year: create one short, impactful video that may be shown repeatedly.

*Suggestion was made to inform clergy what specific outcomes they and their laypeople can expect at AC, so they can be more prepared for the experience, which might make it more meaningful. Also encourage clergy to talk to their lay member before AC about how to make comment at the microphone and other logistics of AC.

*Suggestion was made to allow members to sit by church and district again – especially during teaching and discussion sessions. This may allow stronger take-aways from those sessions.

*Suggestion was made to offer ideas for attendees to watch for and to talk about outcomes during the Orientation meeting. Also talked about calling it "Orientation" instead of "Maximizing AC Experience" (clearer labeling, hopefully more people will attend.)

*Suggestion was made to open the "under 40" social time to clergy and lay people. The idea of a social mixer was also mentioned.

3. Additional thoughts/feedback:

Cindy read a thank you letter from the AC house band from Rochester: Christ.

4. Budget/balance sheet review:

Gail announced that more than 800 registered this year. Currently, the spreadsheet shows a deficit of \$4700, but that may be adjusted as account corrections are made.

Approximate totals: \$175,000 income, \$180,000 expenses

Looking Ahead – 2019 AC Initial Planning

1. Tuesday – Thursday June 18-20, 2019. Theme: Reach: Dare to Disciple: Live Boldly.

2. Key outcomes:

Cindy suggested:

*Scripture: 'Jesus encounter disciples' John 1:35-51 Come and see; John 4:1-42 daring to go outside – woman at the well; Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch; Acts 4: Peter and Stephen have to talk about what seen and heard.

*"Generational IQ" book: Building relationships in an increasingly diverse and divisive world.

*Inspire & equip, energized – not guilted or told what to do.

*12 steps leading to a spiritual awakening.

*Keeping church doors open wrong motivation –

*Song: "Send us out"

Carol suggested:

*Scripture: Psalm 139, 2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 12, Philippians 4:13

Rachael suggested:

*She is very inspired by woman at the well scripture, multiplying aspect, practical elements of this scripture that would transfer to teaching, worship, etc., practical ways to disciple boldly.

Barb suggested:

*She would like to see AC 2019 provide help in sharing faith - how do we go beyond just knowing and chatting with the coffee shop barista; how do we do the next step of sharing faith/Jesus. (Carol added, ...without being obnoxious.)

Cindy suggested:

*The next generation is interested in conversation and deep theological discussions; they don't want to be told, don't want someone to give answers.

Bishop summarized ideas so far:

*Connecting my why Jesus to your why question; or in other words, connecting scriptural stories with people's stories. Connection of the Biblical story/my why Jesus story with their why Jesus questions.

*Questions that might help focus AC content: How do we listen for the why Jesus questions? How do we know that we're empowered/equipped to do this? Do I have the skills (Skill training for this work)? Do I think it makes a difference (How sharing faith can change a person's eternity now)? Appropriate way to connect by generation? - Each generation needs different way.

3. Big Components:

*2020 General conference election – one clergy, one lay.

*Community event? Past attendees appreciated informal event, need to match with theme/outcomes – need to reserve park?

*Post 2019 General Conference Special Session discussion?

*Red Rock return?

*150th anniversary of Missions Society?

*TED-style talks?

*Conference teacher? Martha Grace Reese ("Unbinding the Gospel"); Mark Teasdale ("Evangelism for Non-Evangelists"); Stephanie Spellers ("Radical Welcome"). Bishop will need to contact by September.

2020 Annual Conference Advance Planning

1. Wed. – Fri, June 10-12 in Sioux Falls, SD. Theme: Heal: Be the Light: Live Hope!

*Responses from north: they are willing to take 3 nights, but not 4

*Need to be mindful of what events MN & DAK can do together, and what each needs to do individually.

*How do we incorporate everything into 3 days and not extend the hotel stay to 4 nights? Timing will impact travel, hotel expense, so need to plan schedule carefully.

*Suggestion was made to offer travel by bus for those a long distance from Sioux Falls. Each district might want to put feelers out about that.

*It was noted that it will be very difficult to do CL&M worship as it has been in the recent past. Ordination would be ok to do together, but the other celebrations would not work as well. Suggestion was made to maybe start with a Memorial service, offer a Retirement celebration at a separate time and ordination together.

*Christa asked how we will negotiate the big pieces – who's responsible for what. There will be a communications collaboration meeting, followed by planning the logistics. Cindy and Rebecca Trefz (DAK) will be working on details too. It was suggested that following these Initial conversations it would be great to plan a joint sessions meeting with a few members from each sessions team.

*Cindy mentioned that a joint design team will be formed who would then report to each Sessions team so planning can begin early. It was decided that a report at the Feb. 14 meeting would be a good goal.

*Bishop also offered an idea that he was considering: Inviting Bishop Dyck and Bishop Kiesey (former MN & DAK bishops) back to preach. Bishop may reach out and see about schedules.

It was also mentioned that although this will be a celebration of the past eight years with Bishop Ough, it should also be a look ahead to what next 8 years may look like.

2018-2019 meetings dates:

Tuesday, Sept 25

Monday, Nov 19

Thursday, Feb 14

Thursday, May 2

Thursday, July 25

All meetings will be held from 10:00-Noon.

Next meeting, Tuesday Sept 25; 10:00-Noon

Items for the agenda include:

- *Update from Think Tank
- *Discussion around Community Event for 2019
- *Discussion around room set up, etc for 2019
- *Finalized scripture so Karla can start on a logo for 2019
- *Updates on 2020 planning

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Beard, Conference Secretary & Registrar