

## Provincial Update – March 1, 2017

*The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18*  
*MCNP Watchword for 2017*

### Happy Birthday to the Unitas Fratrum – 560 years old!

On the birthday of the church, we recall the rich and faithful witness of our ancestors, who followed Jesus, even when it cost them their homelands, their way of life, indeed their very lives. Today, we draw on this history and claim, as part of our DNA, the courage to follow with hope wherever God leads. On Sunday, February 26, Moravians of the greater Bethlehem, PA area hosted an interfaith gathering. “Join We All: Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees as Neighbors and Friends” brought together about 300 people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and no faith communities to learn from one another in a simple Lovefeast of world breads and water. In my words of welcome, I reminded those in attendance that we are all immigrants, yet welcomed by God’s expansive embrace. I quoted John Amos Comenius, *“We are all citizens of one world, we are all of one blood. To hate a man because he was born in another country, because he speaks a different language, or because he takes a different view on this subject or that, is a great folly. Desist, I implore you, for we are all equally human.... Let us have but one end in view, the welfare of humanity.”* I affirmed our ongoing commitment to stand with refugees with words from the Unity Synod 2016 Statement on Refugees: *“...to side with the refugees, to lend them their voice, to speak out against hatred and discrimination.”* When our Muslim brothers and sisters were called to prayer and retreated to prayer rugs in the back of Johnston Hall, the rest of us quietly prayed in our own ways – that we might all join together in a common witness of hospitality and hope. As we celebrate the birthday of the Worldwide Moravian Church, may we celebrate our heritage, our faithfulness and our witness. The full text of my welcome, along with the bulletin and other resources will be sent to clergy in a separate memo.  

– Betsy Miller

### Lent 2017

March 1 marks the beginning of the holy season of Lent, as we journey with faith and hope toward the cross of Good Friday and resurrection victory of Easter Sunday. As congregations gather to observe this season in various ways, whether to give up or take on something, may we all join together to contemplate the gift of faith – and God’s eternal embrace.

### Welcome Jacquie!

We are thrilled to welcome Jacquie Petko, our new Benefits/HR Manager. Jacquie started on February 21 and brings strong experience in the management of benefits and HR policies. She lives in the Bethlehem area with her husband and two children. Serving with her is Marie Ritter, long-time staff member in the Benefits Office. Jacquie is available at 610.867.7566, ext. 16 or [jacquie@mcnp.org](mailto:jacquie@mcnp.org)

### PEC/DEBs Meet

Members of the Provincial Elders’ Conference and all three District Boards (East, West, Canada) will gather together for a meeting May 4-7 in Chaska, MN to hear from the IPO Listening Session and discern how we might organize ourselves to more fully live out our identity and purpose. Susan Nienaber, a consultant known to many in our church, will provide leadership. Please be in prayer for this gathering.

### IPO Updates

Identity, Purpose, and Organization Listening Sessions have brought together 100s of people, eager to learn and share about who we are as Northern Province Moravians. Thank you to those who have participated – and to host congregations! More sessions are coming up:

March 4 – Lehigh Valley 9-12

March 11 – Penn/Mar region 9-12

March 12 – NYC metro 4-7 pm

March 18 – Minnesota 9-12

March 19 – North Dakota 1-4

April 1 – Hope, West Salem at Hope 10am-1pm

April 2 – Michigan – after church

### PECs North and South Gather

Members of the Provincial Elders’ Conferences in both the Northern and Southern Provinces meet every year to hear reports from our interprovincial agencies and discuss matters of mutual interest. In an effort to support one another and discern God’s leading for our work, both PECs will gather for group spiritual direction April 25-27 at a retreat center in North Carolina. Please be in prayer for the leading of the Holy Spirit to be evident in our time together.

**Mileage** – the US mileage reimbursement rate for 2017, set by the IRS is 53.5 cents/mile.

### **Unity Offering**

The Unity Offering for 2017 will help provide funding for the 2017 Unity Mission Conference to be held in November in Cape Town, South Africa. Our province will be sending six delegates. Please be generous with your support of this opportunity!

### **2018 Synod – June 21-25**

The 2018 Northern Province Synod will be held on the campus of Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA June 21-25, 2018. The theme is "Gather...Grow...Go!" Stay tuned for more information from the Nominating Committee and the Planning Committee.

### **Convo 2017**

Convo 2017 will be held July 1-6 in Washington, DC. The interprovincial gathering is open to youth finishing grades 8-12. The theme, Witness, will look at race, today's reality, and the Bible. The cost is \$800 plus transportation and includes all meals, food, and admissions to exhibits and events. Contact Cynthia Rader Geyer ([Cynthia@mcnp.org](mailto:Cynthia@mcnp.org)) for more information.

### **Seminarian Update**

Senior Seminarians Gregory Behrend, Benjamin Lippert, and Mandy Mastros have been approved for ordination upon receipt and acceptance of a call. James Heroux, Linda Wisser, Timothy Naisby and Alyssa Nelson continue with their studies. Please keep all of these students in your prayers.

## **IPO Grants Awarded**

The Provincial Elders' Conference invited groups or congregations to apply for grants to experiment about our identity and purpose. Ten groups were awarded grants totaling just over \$140,000. We are thrilled to watch how these experiments play out and what we learn from our courageous servants!

**Carpenter's Tool Box** – teaching young adults trade skills and offering work day/mission projects; Kenosha, Wisconsin

**ESL for the Neighborhood** – offering hospitality and English as a Second Language for neighbors; Church of the Redeemer, Dublin, Ohio

**Farmhouse Retreat Center** – repurposing a rural parsonage to offer sustainable farming retreats; Fry's Valley, Ohio

**Solitary Confinement Cell** – educating about incarceration through a model solitary confinement cell stationed in a church fellowship hall; Green Bay, Wisconsin

**Seeds of Peace/Ecumenical Alliance** – a congregation joining with ecumenical partners in the city to make a difference in the community; Lakeview, Madison, Wisconsin

**Social Service Provision** – exploring how to provide social services at congregations located where the distance to agencies makes access difficult; Nazareth, Pennsylvania

**100 Seconds Videos** – telling our Moravian story through 100 second videos posted on YouTube and other social media sites; Church Without Walls, Bethlehem, PA

**Spiritual Companionship** – home based spiritual direction that welcomes neighbors, not just church members, into the process; Rio Terrace, Edmonton, Alberta

**Bilingual After School Program** – for a church next door to a school; the church members wish to learn Spanish to offer hospitality; Trinity, New Carrollton, Maryland

**Lay Leadership** – a lay-led congregation sharing stories of their journey, and what they have learned; Main Street, Northfield, Minnesota.