



# THE PROVINCIAL ELDERS' CONFERENCE

(EXECUTIVE BOARD)

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**THE MORAVIAN CHURCH** • Northern Province

## **An Epistle to the Moravian Church Northern Province From the Leaders of the Province May 2017**

God has given the Moravians a gift to share with the world! Our love for Jesus, our passion for mission, and our deep relationships offer a witness to our faithfulness. Members of all three District Boards (Canada, East, and West) and the Provincial Elders' Conference heard good news in a variety of ways as we gathered in Chaska, Minnesota May 4-7, 2017 to discern God's leading for the future direction of the Northern Province.

Facilitated by Susan Nienaber, consultant and friend of the Moravian Church, thirty participants had a chance to ask the "Big Why". "When you know your *why*, your *what* has more impact because you are walking toward your purpose." We told stories of why we follow Jesus and then extended that conversation to why the Moravian Church follows Jesus. God calls us to live the love of Jesus. Our mission is to equip congregations and people to be messengers of God's transforming love in the world.

The purpose of our gathering was to build strong relationships across the four leadership bodies of the province in order to fulfill God's mission in varying expressions. We spent time in worship and prayer, discerning God's leading for the next chapter of our province. We met to respond to what the wider church told us at the Identity, Purpose, and Organization (IPO) Listening Sessions held throughout the province earlier this year.

We are grateful to all of you – for praying for our time together – and for sharing your best ideas with us during the IPO Listening Sessions. We offer our heartfelt thanks to the members of the IPO Team! We heard you entrusting us to bring a proposal to the 2018 Provincial Synod about how we might structure ourselves to best fulfill God's mission. You will hear more about this throughout the year and especially at the pre-synod meetings. We heard you ask us to find ways to streamline provincial governance while still allowing for districts to provide congregational support at the regional level.

**We developed some desired outcomes:**

- \* Claim – and offer – the gifts God has given us to share with the world!
- \* Align our mission and vision, according to God’s leading, to fulfill our strategies and increase our capacity to impact the world with the love of Jesus Christ.
- \* Allow for regional/district governance to provide “needs-specific” congregational support.
- \* Nurture provincial collaboration through a governance structure that ensures that we are not simply three districts, but one province – implementing one vision in a variety of ways.
- \* Create greater collaboration on the appropriate placement of clergy in the call process by strengthening dialogue among district boards regarding current human resources and specific congregational needs.
- \* Reduce the cost of governance by better leveraging district and provincial resources for the common good of the entire province.

**We pledged to work on these next steps:**

- \* Organize a province-wide prayer initiative to invite the whole church to collectively seek God’s leading.
- \* All four leadership bodies will gather two more times prior to synod to practice a new way of working together toward one vision that might be more effective and faithful than working separately. We believe that working together in some areas while allowing freedom in other areas will strengthen the call process, better leverage district and provincial resources for the common good, and lessen redundancies at all levels.
- \* The four presidents (Dave Bennett, Betsy Miller, Bruce Nelson, Greg Weir) will meet strategically to work more intentionally as a team to steward this work as one unit.
- \* We will review the governance structure – and bring an overall vision and specific plan to the 2018 synod, with preparation offered at the Pre-Synod meetings.
- \* We will keep communicating with you about what we are learning on this journey.

Rev. Bruce S. Nelson

Dave Bennett

Greg Weir

Betsy Miller