

Provincial Update - July 2017

On July 6, we remember the faithful witness of Br. Jan Hus, who died a martyr in 1415 because he refused to deny his faith to satisfy those in power. As we contemplate Hus' faithfulness, may it inspire us to live with the kind of faith that overcomes fears and obstacles - and all that keeps us from following Jesus.

-Betsy Miller

2018 Provincial Synod

The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, to be held June 21-25 on the campus of Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA, will bring together laity and clergy from every congregation of the province. Provincial Synod is the highest legislative body of the church and is charged with discerning God's leading for our ministries, electing leaders, and considering how we will join together to fund our common ministries. The theme for synod is "Gather...Grow...Go..." God has gathered us together to grow in faith and discipleship and challenges us to go into our neighborhoods and around the world. The Synod Planning team is chaired by Sr. Melissa Johnson, along with Br. Jeffrey Long, Sr. Maggie Wellert, and provincial staff.

Pre-Synod meetings will be held throughout the province, from January through March of 2018. You will want to schedule Church Council this fall so that you may elect your congregation's delegate(s) in time to allow their participation in these meetings.

Reading Moravian Center of the Lititz Moravian Church...

The Lititz Moravian Church in Pennsylvania has opened a "branch office" 30 miles away in Reading, PA! The Reading Moravian Church was declining in attendance and funding even as its Feeding Ministry was growing. Instead of 'closing up shop', members at Reading invited Lititz to 'adopt' them. In an experiment approved by the Provincial Elders' Conference, the Reading Moravian Church has been dissolved *as a congregation* and the Reading Moravian *Center* has opened, under the leadership and support of the Lititz Moravian Church. On June 11, 54 members of the Reading congregation transferred their membership to Lititz. Why did this congregation willingly dissolve? So they could continue feeding people in the neighborhood! Why did Lititz adopt this ministry? Because they felt called to care for those in need! The pastors and leaders of both congregations have been working together for months to bring this dream to a reality. Please pray for the Reading Center, the Lititz congregation, and those being fed through this faithful ministry.

Downey Moravian holds closing service

On Pentecost Sunday, June 4, the Downey Moravian Church was bursting at the seams as former and current members, friends, and ecumenical partners joined in giving thanks for 63 years of faithful ministry. Held on the Sunday nearest their anniversary, the sanctuary was filled with the sound of trombones and voices raised, with tears and celebration. While the congregation has been formally dissolved, their Food Pantry will continue. Both an Episcopalian and Lutheran (ELCA) congregation reached out with an offer to host the Food ministry and any Moravians wanting to join and/or worship as a Fellowship. Remarkably, both congregations cancelled their own worship services on June 4 so that their members could worship with the Moravians. That is ecumenical grace!

Unity Discussion Paper

The Unity Committee on Theology (UCOT) has created a *Discussion Paper on the Role of the Unity*. It was presented at the 2016 Unity Synod and commended to each province for study and reflection. The Interprovincial Board of Communication has formatted this resource for use in congregations. Available as a download from the IBOC, it is a three-session study, with discussion questions. We hope all congregations will consider using this resource as an adult or youth study. We request feedback by December 2017. Go to <http://www.moravian.org/moravian-church-northern-province/discussion-paper-on-the-role-of-the-worldwide-moravian-unity/>

Sympathy and Prayers

Sr. Judy Kaaua, a member of the Provincial Elders' Conference since 2010, passed away at her home in Waconia, Minnesota on June 12. A service of celebration was held June 24 at the Lake Auburn Moravian Church, where Judy had belonged since birth. Judy served the wider church on the Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Board, as a Treasurer for the Western District, a member of the Ordination Review Committee, the Larger Life Foundation, as well as serving as Chair of the provincial Finance Committee. Judy's life, witness, and talents leave a huge hole in the church's heart. We extend our love, sympathy and prayers to her father, Wilfred Plocher, her sister Susan (and Michael) Thomas, and extended family.

Interprovincial Convo in DC!

Please be in prayer for the staff and participants of the 2017 Youth Convocation, being held in Washington, DC July 1-6. The theme is "Witness!" and brought together youth from both provinces to discuss issues of racism, privilege and advocacy.

MMFA Transitions

On June 1, the Moravian Ministries Foundation in America welcomed Chris Spaugh as its new President. After a nationwide search, the board was thrilled to invite Chris to take the organization into the future. Chris is from the Winston-Salem, NC area and brings with him a strong background in wealth management and non-profit charitable foundations. Even as we welcome Chris, we bid farewell to Paul McLaughlin. A service and dinner celebrating Paul's leadership was held in conjunction with the MMFA board meeting in June. Paul was hired to shape MMFA twenty years ago, and has led it to an organization that serves individuals, congregations, agencies and both provinces in 'investing where we believe.' Paul will retire on June 30 to spend more time with his family. Thank you, Paul, for all your leadership and vision to bring MMFA to its strong position today!

Larger Life Foundation (LLF) Awards Grants

The Larger Life Foundation provides grants to agencies and congregations of the Northern Province, through an application process. This year, eleven groups applied, requesting a total of \$196,226. Larger Life gave grants totaling \$54,285 to eight of those organizations for building repairs, new signs, building upgrades to prepare for new ministries, and a pilot program for music therapy. Go to www.largerlifefoundation.org to learn more about how to apply for a grant or make a gift to strengthen the fund.

Ecumenical Connections

The Moravian Church is deeply committed to ecumenism and building up the broader Body of Christ. This summer, Betsy Miller represented us at the Annual Convention of the Reformed Church in America in Holland, Michigan and will attend the 67th Biennial Convention of the Unity of the Brethren in Temple, Texas. The Unity of the Brethren are our 'cousins' in the faith, tracing their heritage back to Jan Hus. On her way home from Texas, she will stop in Indianapolis for the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Betsy has worked closely with their outgoing General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins. While there Betsy will attend the Council on Christian Unity Global Ministries International Dinner celebrating ecumenical relationships.

Br. Hermann Weinlick just returned from a meeting of the Christian Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) in Dallas, Texas. He serves as Secretary of this body.

And, our ecumenical coordinating committees continue to help us live out our full communion relationships.

Society for Promoting the Gospel (SPG) Awards Grants

The mission of the SPG is to support the work of the Board of World Mission and offer mission grants to congregations and agencies of the Northern Province. This year, the Board of Directors awarded \$15,137 to seven groups who will be promoting the gospel in a variety of ways. SPG grants are awarded every year, with an application deadline of April 15 each year.

The SPG is always looking for new members to share in the ministry and support of its work. For more information, email the provincial office: Gloria@mcnp.org