

## **MMSC COUNCIL REPORT**

### **(June 15, 2013 – September 30, 2013)**

Dear Missouri Mid-South Conference Clergy and Lay Members:

It has been a busy summer and I thought it appropriate to personally provide an update of MMSC Council activities and happenings since we gathered at the Conference Annual Gathering in June. I presented this information at the Eastern and Western Associations Fall Meetings/Gatherings. I also sent a version of this update to St. Louis Association Fall Meeting because I was unable to attend the SLA meeting due to a conflict in meeting schedules with the SLA Fall Meeting and the MMSC Council weekend retreat meeting at the Rickman Center occurring on the same weekend.

### **MMSC Happenings**

In addition to performing the administrative duties of Conference Ministry during her brief tenure, the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree traveled over 3,000 miles and visited 30 local churches throughout the Conference. She also played a significant role in the following activities and events.

### **Conference Vision Team**

The Vision Team has been selected and includes 13 members: four (4) from each of the St. Louis and Western Associations and five (5) from the Eastern Association. Joyce Bathke (MMSC vice moderator and 2014 Moderator-elect) is the 5<sup>th</sup> Vision Team member from the EA. The Rev. Dr. Paul Koch (Pastor, St. Peters UCC, Washington, Mo) is VT chairperson. The Rev. Dr. Richard (Dick) Hamm is our visioning facilitator. The VT consists of seven men and six women, five clergy and eight lay persons; members from four large churches (300 members or greater), two medium-sized churches (150-299 members) and six small churches (up to 149 members).

### **Meeting Site Locations**

The Conference is seeking new locations to hold its 2014 Conference Annual Gathering and Council Annual Retreat Meeting. Drury University will not be available to use in June 2014. Instead we will be meeting at the Truman Hotel and Conference Center in Jefferson City, Mo. Please see the article in this past week's eCourier and contact Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Dale Parson for more information or if you are interested in helping plan the 2014 CAG.

The Rickman Center will no longer host meetings after Thanksgiving of his year. The Council is seeking to find a suitable location for its 2-day retreat meeting. We will also consider that the retreat meeting be specifically dedicated to board (Council) training and development (The MMSC has received at \$5,000 grant from Deaconess Foundation in support of the Council's board development initiatives for governance and fiduciary responsibilities as well as legal matters.

### **Shannondale Carbon Credit Project**

The Project Implementation Agreement (PIA) was executed between the MMSC's Shannondale Carbon LLC and Finite Carbon which is assisting the Conference, through Shannondale Carbon LLC to qualify as a registered carbon offset project. The execution of the PIA is the first step in the registration process. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, Finite Carbon and the MMSC/SCLLC registered the 4000 acre Shannondale Tree Farm (the oldest continuously-owned tree farm in the State of Missouri) with the Climate Action Reserve (CAR) a national offsets program which works to ensure integrity and transparency in the U.S. carbon market. Shannondale has received over 122,000 CAR offsets and is being transitioned into the California Air Resources Board program. The MMSC will be the first religious entity in **the** United States to complete a carbon offset project for California's greenhouse gas emission reduction program. We look forward to receive word from CAR that our project has been registered within the next week or two. As our Council meets this weekend we will discuss the efficacy of establishing a Shannondale Carbon Covenanted Ministry. A press release has been prepared jointly by Shannondale Carbon LLC and Finite Carbon and awaits the completion of the registration process by CAR.

### **At the August 24<sup>th</sup> Council meeting the following actions was taken:**

- Jan Aerie was ratified as Minister for Strategic Innovation, an 11 month position to identify aspects of Conference work and assess the viability and sustainability of alternative ways to make our transition to a Conference with reduced staff as healthy and successful as possible for our congregations. Jan has already conducted over 50 interviews with authorized ministers and lay members within the Conference.
- Adopted four (4) recommendations from the Finance and Administration Committee to strengthen the Council's Fiduciary and stewardship responsibilities:
  - Investment Policy for Conference Reserve Fund Account
  - Gift Acceptance Policy
  - Proposed Distribution of Funds for the Carbon Credit Program
  - Proposed Policy to set Authorization Levels and Tracking of Spending from Multi-Year Fund Accounts
- Adopted the following calendar dates for regularly scheduled Council meetings: October 4-5, 2013 (Rickman Center); January 11, 2014 & April 12, 2014 (Columbia UCC, Columbia, MO); June 13-14, 2014 (Conference Annual Gathering Truman Hotel & Conference Center, Jefferson City)

**September 7**, many Conference members gathered at Faith UCC in Columbia, MO to express our appreciation to Davida and wish her well on her return to Connecticut on September 14. We had a great time!

**September 8 and 9**, the Council's Executive conducted interviews for the Acting Conference Minister to succeed Rev. Crabtree and serve as a 'bridge' CM while the Conference conducts its search for a settled conference minister. On September 10, the Executive Committee unanimously selected the Rev. Dr. Allen Fluent as Acting CM. The Council affirmed Rev. Fluent's selection by electronic vote and his selection will be ratified by the Council at our meeting this weekend at the Rickman Center. Allen's start date was September 1

**September 10**, I emailed the Council that I received a letter from Rev. Jeffrey Whitman informing of his resignation as Conference Minister, effective September 1, 2013. By way of email the Council noted to accept Rev. Whitman's resignation. The Council's e-vote will be ratified at our meeting this weekend.

**Thursday, September 12**, I was officially informed by a letter from the St. Louis Association Committee on Ministry voted to "formally accept the findings of the Iowa Conference Committee on Authorized Ministry regarding Rev. Whitman's fitness for ministry... and unanimously approved a motion to pursue a Conditional Affirmation of Fitness with a Prescribed Program of Growth."

**Friday, September 13**, Rev. Crabtree and I sent a pastoral letter (via eConnections) to Conference clergy and lay members informing of the adjudicated outcome of Rev. Whitman's fitness review and asking that Jeff, Randy and their family be held in our prayers.

**September 16**, I informed Conference membership via eConnections of Rev. Fluent's selection as our bridge Acting Conference Minister.

The Peace of Christ Our Lord,

Wesley D. Hurt, Jr.  
Conference Moderator