

Western Association Vice Moderator Report 2020

The members of the Western Association Planning Committee were: Julie Glover, Jayne Clouser, Mary Tallitsch, Paul Kirker, Jon Prain (Association Moderator), and Kathy Lawes as staff person. Various other people also sat in on our meetings and provided valuable ideas and input. A special thank you also to Sue Welch, past Western Association Moderator, for her help.

This year has moved from the usual to the unusual. Our first meeting at the end of 2019, was a joint fall meeting with the Eastern Association on October 19, 2019. The overarching theme was "Conversations Across the (CHURCH) Aisle". The objective was to learn ways to communicate with someone who may hold different views than you do in a non-judgmental way. The keynote speaker was Ms. Sarah Howell, Assistant Director, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. In general, the meeting was well received.

We attempted to streamline the meeting by starting at 10:00 a.m. and scheduling the speaker to begin mid-way through lunch. That way, we were able to release people from the meeting at about 2:15 p.m. The comments received on the meeting were good overall with some liking the change to listening to the speaker over lunch, while others wished for more conversation time at lunch. The breakout sessions were well received. No complaints were noted about finishing the meeting earlier. The registration fee was \$20 per person except for youth, members-in-discernment, retired clergy and spouses or partners of people that did not need to pay full price.

Planning was proceeding for the spring meeting that was scheduled to be at Trinity UCC in Quincy, IL on April 25, 2020. We were due to listen to Rev. Terrill Murff, the new Acting CMA ACM. He was going to help us discover "The REAL business of the Church". In an effort to increase participation for potential Constitution changes, we were moving to a free-will offering at lunch instead of charging attendees.

Unfortunately, like many meetings, this one fell victim to COVID-19 protective measures which were taken. We are regrouping and will continue to plan for the Fall meeting, currently scheduled for the end of October at First Congregational Church, in Moline and begin work on the Spring Meeting for 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Newcomb,

Western Association Vice Moderator and Chairperson of the Planning Committee