

2022 Program and Arrangements Committee Report

The Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee (P&AC) reorganized at its hybrid meeting in August. Moderator-Elect Tim McElwee and new committee members Beth Jarrett (elected for a two-year term ending in 2023) and Nathan Hollenberg (elected for a three-year term ending in 2024) joined Moderator David Sollenberger, Annual Conference Secretary Jim Beckwith, and continuing committee member Carol Hipps Elmore. Outgoing Director of Annual Conference Chris Douglas and incoming Director of Annual Conference Rhonda Pittman Gingrich met with the committee as ex-officio members. Debbie Noffsinger, Conference Assistant, also provides support for the committee and the ministry of Annual Conference.

Chaired by Moderator David Sollenberger, the committee reviewed evaluation forms from the 2021 Annual Conference held virtually June 30-July 4, 2021 and began planning for the 2022 Annual Conference to be held in Omaha, Nebraska, July 10-14, 2022 with a focus on how the upcoming Conference can more faithfully fulfill the Annual Conference mission to “unite, strengthen and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.”

The theme for the 2022 Conference, chosen by the Moderator, is “Embracing One Another, As Christ Embraces Us.” Primary scripture texts and daily themes were chosen for each worship service, along with preachers, worship leaders, and musicians. The Worship Planning Team, chaired by third-year P&AC member, Carol Hipps Elmore, met jointly with P&AC and then on their own to continue planning for the Annual Conference worship services. Other members of the worship planning team include: Paula Bowser, Tim Hollenberg-Duffey, Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, and music coordinator, Scott Duffey.

In its effort to more faithfully fulfill the Annual Conference mission, P&AC made a decision to pivot from insight sessions to equipping sessions. These sessions should reflect a renewed and expanded emphasis on equipping and empowering congregations and participants for a life of discipleship and service to Christ and the Church. As such, they should be interactive learning experiences that introduce or explore practical tools, skills, practices, or frameworks that participants can take home with them to enhance their personal or congregational ministry, particularly in relation to discipleship formation, neighborhood engagement and missional outreach, leadership development, and stewardship enhancement.

Planning continued at the November P&AC meeting, which was held in person. In addition to traditional activities like business sessions, worship services, equipping sessions, meal events, age group programming, and opportunities to browse in a robust exhibit hall, the committee also made plans for four special

late evening activities, two excursions to local attractions, and a Witness to the Host City project. Late evening activities will include a table game night in the exhibit hall, a Ted and Co. production of *We Own This Now*, a Bittersweet Gospel Band concert, and a Mike Stern and Friends concert. Participants will also have an opportunity to participate in planned excursions to the Durham Museum and the Tri-Faith Commons. The Witness to the Host City project will support the work of Girls, Inc. Omaha as they seek to support and empower girls, kindergarten through grade 12.

In response to the ongoing pandemic, the committee consulted with medical professionals, epidemiologist Dr. Kathryn Jacobsen and physician Dr. Emily Shonk Edwards, to develop a COVID plan for Annual Conference.

The 2022 Annual Conference is being jointly hosted by the Western Plains, Northern Plains, and Missouri-Arkansas districts. Site Coordinators Bill and Lois Grove secured volunteers from all three districts to tend to various tasks related to Annual Conference. P&AC is deeply grateful to all of the volunteers who share their time and talents to make Annual Conference possible.

Future sites and dates for Annual Conference have been chosen by P&AC and reflect a commitment to honor contracts we were forced to cancel in 2020 and 2021. To secure the lowest possible prices, we once again accepted a change in the days of the week for 2023. Upcoming locations and dates include:

2023 Cincinnati, OH	July 4-8 (Tuesday-Saturday)
2024 Grand Rapids, MI	July 3-7 (Wednesday-Sunday)
2025 Greensboro, NC	July 2-6 (Wednesday-Sunday)

The Program and Arrangements Committee wants your feedback about this year's Conference in Omaha. An evaluation form is available at www.brethren.org/ac. On the day Annual Conference ends, this link will be emailed to all registrants. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated and will be taken very seriously as we plan for the 2023 Annual Conference.

David Sollenberger, Moderator
Tim McElwee, Moderator-Elect
James M. Beckwith, Annual Conference Secretary
Carol Hipps Elmore
Beth Jarrett
Nathan Hollenberg
Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, ex-officio

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the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.*

