

LAY DELEGATE REPORT ON ALL FLORIDA NETWORK GATHERING 2018

It was a pleasure representing King of Peace MCC at the 2018 All Florida Network Gathering in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, October 26 and 27, held at MCC of the Palm Beaches.

A network gathering is an opportunity for folks from all the Florida MCC's to meet, share ideas, hold wonderful worship services, and exchange thoughts of the future. This year's meeting was especially fruitful, with 18 of the MCC churches in Florida represented. Rev. Elder Dr. Candace Shultis was present, as well as our Associate Pastor, Rev Gina Durbin, and our Director of Music, Jeremiah Cummings. Also attending from King of Peace were my husband, Lawrence Konrad, Ray Simms, an active "in care" MCC clergy candidate and Sherrill Parmley. Both Ray and Sherrill are candidates for Lay Delegate at the upcoming King of Peace congregational meeting,

The opening worship service was a very good beginning for an active two day conference. Rev. Stanley Ramos, the Associate Pastor from Joy MCC in Orlando, gave an inspiring message of hope, and traced his own personal journey to MCC. Jeremiah was Music Director for the gathering, and he and Rev Gina lead our worship.

Workshops completed the morning session: First, Rev. Kurt Krieger's workshop on "What is The New Thing God is Doing in MCC, a Holy Conversation on the changes and challenges facing MCC; then Rev. Ruth Jensen-Forbell gave an overview of MCC's Emerging Churches, an overview of the exciting movement of our churches throughout the world, and how we might become involved.

MCC of the Palm Beaches provided a very satisfying lunch each day, as well as good eats for the Continental Breakfast each morning. Their kitchen worked well for our crowd, and service was presented in an atmosphere of real hospitality.

The afternoon began with a report from one of the members of the Moderator's Nominating Committee, Rev. Brendan Boone, who explain the process, and the time-line under which they are operating. We should know their nominees for Moderator by February 2019. The next workshop was conducted by Jared Vasquez, on Diversity and Inclusion. Jared was an interesting choice for this position with the Fellowship; he is not a Christian, but does honor and take communion, and he shared many ideas on how we approach diversity in our church, and how we see inclusion. The afternoon workshops concluded with a very interesting review by Lauren Bennett (a former KOP MCC member, now going to Seminary, and working as a member of the UFMCC staff, particularly centered on preparing for General Conference in Orlando next July) of her experience over the summer interning in San Francisco with the Nightshift, an active ministry to street folks living throughout the Bay Area.

Saturday's session began following the continental breakfast. Rev. Boone and his wife, Sandra, presented a workshop entitled Kaleidoscope, how our churches include the transgendered community, including their spouses and families. This was followed by Lauren Bennett and Elizabeth Jensen-Forbell discussing General Conference 2019. The morning session concluded with an extensive report from Equality Florida, and what that organization is doing to protect the GLBTQ community.

Following another excellent lunch, the group broke down into two sessions, a session for the Clergy, and one for the Lay Delegates. In the Lay Delegates session there was general discussion on what new delegates should become familiar with prior to General Conference; ways to keep your congregation up-to date on what is going on in MCC, and promoting General Conference in Orlando next July.

The final session was conducted by a brand-new member of the MCC Governing Board, Christy Temples, and the Pastoral Leader of our church in Tallahassee. Poor Christy was bombarded with some angry discussion concerning the action of the Governing Board over the past two years, and especially over the expenditures which far exceeded the revenue generated each month. She was most gracious, and kept a very even temperament during the entire session. It was evident to me that she entered this position only a few weeks ago, and is fully aware of the enormous job ahead of her, and the other new members of the Governing Board. She seemed quite prepared to meet those challenges.

The network gathering ended with another wonderful worship service, with our own Rev. Gina delivering the message, and Jeremiah providing a musical accompaniment. We were glad to be with friends and new folk from around Florida and would urge all our members of King of Peace MCC to consider attending the next All Florida Network Gathering, scheduled for 2020.

It is always an honor to serve as one of your Lay Delegates, and I am indebted to King of Peace MCC for this opportunity to represent our church at these gatherings. Thank You.

Robert W. (Bob) Pope

November 1, 2018