

Moderator's Report February 2022

Submitted to Governing Board Meeting 1st March 2022

At this time, we hold the people of Ukraine in our prayers. Following on from my contact with Florin Buhucleanu, Eastern European activist, and the motion passed by the Governing Board to donate funds, Rev. Dr Kharma Amos, Tammy Erwin, Marina Laws and Mike Haase have worked tirelessly over the past few days to enable funds from the MCC disaster relief fund to get to the LGBT organisation, ACCEPT, working with LGBTQ people in Ukraine. We have also opened up ways for MCCers around the world to contribute to this world. I also held a prayer of time and reflection for Ukraine and worked with James Hartman on a press statement, condemning the Russian invasion of its peaceful neighbour.

General Conference 2022 is now approximately four months away. There are so many people working together to make this a fantastic event – worship, programming, access, the business meeting, all the online technology and other logistics. MCCers are amazing, creative, resilient and resourceful and I am deeply appreciative of all the time, energy and prayer that is poured into this experience. It will be the first time that MCC will have had a fully online General Conference business meeting and I am working with a team to set out the procedures for making sure that this runs smoothly, and that everyone understands how to participate. I have been talking with colleagues in other denominations who have already had their denominational meetings online to learn from them. MCC is truly global and this adds a layer of complexity when deciding on timings of meetings and ensuring that people will be able to understand the procedure, whatever language they speak. Mike Haase and Rev. Lauren Bennett are doing a remarkable job in managing all the many aspects of this huge and important event.

The decision to move all aspects of General Conference online will further increase the opportunity to engage with MCCers and our friends around the world. Encouraging congregations to hold “watch parties” where people can come together and share the General Conference experience will give the opportunity for safe in person gatherings, which are an important part of how we build community. I am grateful to the General Conference Core Team and to the Governing Board for being willing to make this decision. It will be an exciting time getting everything ready for 1st July!

The Commission on Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation, which I co-chair with Reverend Dr. Roland Stringfellow, re-opened the three pathways for the month of February, so that people can connect with the Commission and share their experiences of racism and other issues within MCC. Rev. Dr. Stringfellow gave presentations to the Governing Board, Council of Elders and MCC staff to talk about the Commission's work and our next steps. Race equity, diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility.

I met with the chair of the Commission on Rites and Sacraments, Rev. Dr Axel Schwaigert, to discuss the work of the Commission. This is a significant undertaking and will require much thoughtful dialogue throughout the denomination. The Commission will report its findings to the 2025 General Conference.

It was an honour and a delight to attend the People of African Descent: The Next Generation ritual ceremony and to share my hopes for the future of PAD. I look forward to

working in partnership with PAD to ensure that People of African Descent within MCC are involved and valued in all aspects of MCC's ministry.

Other areas of work include:

Connection with MCC churches and Networks

- Recorded video greetings for church anniversaries
- Offered time of prayer and reflection on Facebook Live
- Individual conversations with MCCers around the world
- Providing pastoral support where needed

Diversity and Inclusion

- Met with Rev. Stedney Phillips to discuss diversity, inclusion and laity development at a denominational level, including development of kinship groups and training for lay delegates
- Invited Stedney (who is the Diversity, Inclusion and Laity Development Co-ordinator) to attend the Commission on Pathways of Healing and Reconciliation meetings, to share her work and to support the work of the Commission
- Used tech tips to make my Facebook posts more accessible to those who are visually impaired

Outreach

- Met with Communications staff to discuss how to improve MCC's outward facing communications – press releases, social media etc
- Worked with James Hartman on press releases related to Ukraine and other issues

Strategic Planning

- Created opportunity for staff, Governing Board and Council of Elders to contribute to the development of a strategic vision for MCC to 2030
- Facilitated the Leadership working group to create goals for next 3 years

Governing Board

- Chaired meeting of the Procedures Committee, which is working on the processes for the General Conference online business meeting. Ms Huey Lee, MCC Lubbock, USA co-chairs this committee with me
- Chaired working group of Council of Elders and Governing Board to discuss judiciary policy and procedures.
- Participated in monthly Finance Committee meeting

Staff

- Regular meetings to plan General Conference 2022
- Met with Rebecca Wilson and SLT to discuss networks and how best to support them
- Regular meetings with Rev. Elder Hector Gutierrez and Rev. Dr Kharma Amos as Senior Leadership Team
- Monthly meeting with Rev. Dr Kharma Amos and Marina Laws to discuss ideas for connecting with our Partners in Hope supporters
- Met with staff to discuss challenging situations in individual churches
- Participated in regular staff briefings and facilitated monthly staff meeting

Council of Elders

- Participated in Council of Elders meeting planning
- Participated in Council of Elders Pastoral Care team meeting
- Participated in Council of Elders meeting