

God@Work

- Ephesians 3:20-21 -

del·e·gate

[n. del-i-git, -geyt]

1. one who is chosen to represent or given the authority to act on behalf of another person, group, or organization----Lead, guide, direct.

dis·cern·ment

[noun \di-'sərn-mənt, -'zərn-\]

1. the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure : skill in discerning

FRANCONIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE DEGATE MINISTRY DESCRIPTION

Accepting the role of serving as a Franconia Conference delegate means that you are committing to:

- 1. Preparation for Conference Assemblies:** Pray for God's Spirit to lead us all in being a faithful and worshipping community. You will receive materials in preparation for Conference Assemblies. Become familiar with these materials and the matters that will be presented at Conference Assembly sessions for group consideration and action. Seek clarification on materials or statements that are not understood. When offered, plan to attend Conference Assembly Scattered meetings in preparation for the work of Conference Assemblies. Be in conversation with your congregation or CRM about pertinent issues. In advance seek input from others, engage in prayerful discernment, and your own best thinking.
- 2. Ongoing communication:** Keep aware of what is happening within Franconia Mennonite Conference between Conference Assembly sessions by reading delegate mailings, emails, and *Intersections* (the Franconia Conference periodical), as well as being familiar with the Franconia Conference Web site (<http://www.franconiaconference.org>). Find effective ways to keep your congregation or Conference Related Ministry (CRM) informed and facilitate two-way communication between your congregation or CRM and your conference (which may include conversations or correspondence with conference leaders or representatives).
- 3. Attendance at Conference Assemblies:** Attend and participate in all regular and special Conference Assembly sessions. During Conference Assembly sessions, join with other delegates in worship, conferring, and acting upon Conference Assembly agenda as a representative of your congregation or Conference Related Ministry. In a spirit of discernment, try to represent the perspectives of your congregation or Conference Related Ministry while working cooperatively with other delegates to discern the voice of the Spirit in the assembly and to articulate God's desired future for Franconia Mennonite Conference.
- 4. Post-Conference Assemblies:** After a Conference Assembly session, report and explain the conferring actions of the Conference Assembly to your congregation and encourage your congregation or Conference Related Ministry to support these actions. At a minimum, delegates should be ready to report to their congregations:
 - Where you have seen God at work in the Conference Assembly/Franconia Conference
 - What connects with your passion for ministry within and throughout Franconia Conference
 - Ability to articulate with a personal ownership and passion the immediate priorities of Franconia Mennonite Conference
- 5. Primary Congregational Delegate:** Unless a congregation arranges otherwise, the (lead) pastor will be regarded as the primary delegate for any congregation. The pastor is expected to equip the delegate(s) to function responsibly.
- 6. Mennonite Church USA General Assembly delegates:** Congregations are encouraged to invite Conference Assembly delegate(s) to serve as their representatives to the biannual denominational General Assembly.

Qualifications and Skillsets:

1. Embrace Franconia Conference's mission, vision, and direction.
2. Congregational delegates must be active members of a Franconia Conference congregation and called by their congregation to serve as delegates. Conference Related Ministry delegates must be active members of a Mennonite Church USA congregation.
3. A commitment to discerning God's desired future for Franconia Mennonite Conference.
4. Interest and capacity to deal with systems, values, vision, and the long term.
5. Willingness to make policy decisions in the best interests of the whole church.
6. Personal commitment of time and necessary resources to attend each Conference Assembly meeting.

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Principles of Discernment

- The essence of discernment is hearing and obeying God's voice.
- Discernment is possible only if we look past the human dangers we face and focus on God's unlimited power.
- Discernment involves linking the attentiveness and obedience of the leaders with the people, so all agree in following God's direction.
- Discernment may lead to some unconventional ways of directing God's power to the "impossible" challenges being faced.
- Discernment requires that we focus and refocus on what God is doing, rather than on what we think should be done.

- Discernment requires respectful listening to others who have joined us in seeking God's voice.
- Discernment requires that each person faithfully offer up his or her own giftedness.
- Discernment requires honesty and candor about deep feelings.
- Discernment should include times of silent listening to God's voice.
- Discernment means being open to God saying something different from what we expected.

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Pre-meeting Checklist for Leadership Leading a Discernment Process

- Make sure you are spiritually prepared for the meeting.
- Divide the task into manageable chunks to aid in the group's decision-making process.
- Think through the flow of the task. If it would be useful, make a flow chart.
- Decide what information the group needs.
- Determine the best way to communicate this information. Prepare the information.
- Communicate with the appropriate people so they know what will be coming to the group for discernment.
- Check the timelines to see that you have sufficient time and space to make good decisions. In volunteer organizations, check the availability of key persons.
- Plan or arrange for worship to begin the meeting.
- Hold the group in prayer, that its members will be able to discern God's leadings.

You are ready for the meeting!

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Franconia Mennonite Conference Assembly

Outline for reporting back to your congregation

Prior to Conference Assembly designate:

- Who is going to share a report with your congregation? Or if you are going to share as a team, decide who is going to share about what aspects of the assembly.
- Make sure your pastor or worship leader reserves a few minutes in your worship service for a congregational report...preferably on November 11 (or as soon thereafter as possible).

Overview:

Who else from your congregation served as delegates?

What was this year's theme for Conference Assembly?

Why was that theme chosen?

What was the key scripture?

Who shared and/or was involved?

What?

What did you learn about Franconia Mennonite Conference? What are we doing?

What did you experience that was exciting to you?

What did you learn about other congregations?

Where?

Where did you experience the presence of God in a special way?

Or...where did you see the work of God in a special way?

Or...where did you experience the movement of God in a special way?

Follow up:

Did any questions, comments or counsel arise from your report that should be communicated back to Franconia Conference leaders?

Expect to see God at work! Go with your eyes, ears, and hearts open...expecting to see God!!!



Franconia Mennonite Conference Priorities – 2012/13

Priorities:

With continuing commitment to the vision and mission of Franconia Mennonite Conference being to “Equip Leaders to Empower Others to Embrace God’s Mission” (E³), in January 2012 the Franconia Conference Board identified the fulfillment of its Vision and Financial Plan through the realignment of resources and the movement toward cultivating healthy and growing disciples, leaders, congregations, and connections. In response, the board and Executive Minister Ertell Whigham discerned the following as continuing priorities for conference staff and ministry:

Priority #1: Developing missional initiatives

Over the last years, Franconia Conference has provided Missional Operations Grants for congregations and ministries to promote risk-taking for the sake of the Gospel. Over the next years, Conference will renew a focus on these initiatives across conference congregations, to build relationships among congregations and to promote the development of leaders toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. These grants will be available to all congregations toward creative partnerships and new possibilities for missional engagement both distant and nearby. These partnerships will be intent on mutuality, rooted in considerations of justice, building on strengths, and calling forth new and next generation leaders. Conference Board members would like to increase the capacity of this grant fund.

Priority #2: Networking and cultivating intercultural ministry relationships

This process will include an assessment of current and emerging relationships that work cross-culturally while building further capacity toward mutually beneficial relationships among ministries and congregations. Increasingly, these relationships will be defined by reciprocity and transformation rather than paternalism and patronization. Relationships will be built around both work and celebration and both doing and being together.

Priority #3: Building leadership capacities across geographies and generations

Committed people are Franconia Conference’s greatest resources. We are blessed and privileged with a diversity of gifts and high levels of commitment from our congregations and leaders. This is a strength to be further developed toward a goal of creating opportunities for more involvement of leaders from all congregations. Conference will focus on building further capacities in areas of mediation, peace and justice, and other ministries further working toward relevant and excellent venues for training and equipping. Conference staff will be focused toward these considerations with ongoing evaluation and performance reviews in order to be further equipped for future support of the constituent community.