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Greetings Pastors/Church Leaders/Congregants:

In the past year, seemingly everything that we thought we could count on was under attack. Even the most basic of supplies, toilet paper, was in short supply. But the God of the universe, the one who created us, the one who sacrificed His only Son to pay for our shortcomings, is still the same and still loves and cares for us:

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Matthew 6:25-27*

Many of our congregations have been participating in Phase 1 & 2 of our Discovery 20.21 process by reading, discerning, meeting, and submitting surveys over the past few months. The goal of this process has been to help us as a conference determine the direction that each congregation is being led in order to guide SCMC’s leadership efforts to set a trajectory for the future. Though this process was not always easy, particularly in light of the complications brought on by Covid-19, I can say without hesitation that the work that has been done by our congregations has been good work and that it has furthered our understanding of how God is working in each individual congregation.

I would like to thank you for your hard work and diligence. The Network Leadership Team believes that the information that was gathered in Phases 1 & 2 is more than sufficient to move forward. Therefore, though our initial plan for Phase 3 included a similar survey and congregational meetings, we have decided to forego congregational surveys in Phase 3 of the process.

The Network Leadership Team is continuing to process all we have heard and we are in the final stages of preparing a resolution for our summer conference. In the next few weeks, the completed resolution will be sent to all of our conference churches for discussion and discernment before the summer assembly. At the assembly there will be time for broader discussion. It is important that each congregation appoint their delegates to begin this discernment. Please continue to pray for the NLT as we do our best to follow our Lord and Savior through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*(continued)*



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No one who reads the responses from the discovery process will deny that there are significant differences in how our congregations seek to move forward in ministry. But we can all agree that it is only through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross that any of us are made worthy to spend eternity with Him. And, that while we are all fatally flawed, we have been purified by His precious blood. None of us knows what lies ahead, but we will need to lean heavily on Him to accomplish this process in humility and self-sacrifice. Therefore, we will go forward, armed with the knowledge of God, the love of Christ, and the strength of the Holy Spirit, with confidence and determination to fulfill what he requires of us.

As we prepare for this our summer gathering, I ask that each member of your congregation commit to pray daily:

- that God will help each of us to understand how flawed and self-centered we are
- that God will provide courage and drive out our fear of the unknown
- that God will calm our souls and give us a peace about all that is happening in our world
- that the Holy Spirit will be evident in our meetings this summer
- that God will give each of us a spirit of indifference about the outcome of these proceedings, so that we can prefer God's Will to our own
- and that finally, when we reach the end of this process, God will be glorified

Gary Wolfer  
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South Central Mennonite Conference