

July 8, 2021

Pastors and Delegates SCMC Churches

We sense it is important to share some thoughts and resources with you as we together prepare for our SCMC annual conference July 23-25, 2021.

We value each Congregation as a part of the South Central Mennonite Conference. We invite you to spend personal time opening yourself to the Holy Spirit through biblical discernment in preparation for our Annual Conference. As a delegate to SCMC, you are representing your congregation, and they have entrusted you with the responsibility of listening to God's voice for what is best for your congregation and for the conference. We ask that you as leaders consider spending some time in the following prayers:

Prayers of quiet trust When we take the time for prayer and listening, things that matter will be made clear.

Psalm 131:1-3: *Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

Prayers of indifference - by emptying ourselves, we can learn to ask God to help us be *indifferent* to our ego, pride, territorialism, preference, comfort, and advantage... leaders who can pray this kind of prayer personally can pray this kind of prayer corporately.

Examples: Prayers of Indifference:

Mary, as the mother of Jesus after the angels' visit. *Luke 1:38: "May it be to me as you have said".*

Jesus' prayer in the Garden... *Luke 22:42: "Father, not my will but your will be done."*

Prayers for self-examination and self-discernment - "A leader must pay close attention to what is going on inside him or herself, lest the act of leadership do more harm than good." (Parker Palmer)

Rom 7:21 (TNIV): "So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me."

When I want to do good in leadership, evil is close at hand...that which is unresolved in us...can allow a place for Satan to come in through our false selves...through what is unexamined within us.

As we gather in a few short days, our prayer is that we can learn together as we come with open hands, allowing God to surprise us with his presence, and his grace and renewed love for us as we discern together.

We invite you to pray with us for each congregation in SCMC as we come together.

Romans 12: 1-3: Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

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