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September 2014

Dear Pastors and Communications Coordinators:

The purpose of this letter is to remind and inform you to:

1. Share Mission Center Conference information and new business
2. RSVP to Pastors' Breakfast (in consultation with your pastorate team)
3. Solicit names for nomination, elect and report MC Conference delegates
4. Invite Bishop McFarlin to discuss Disciples' Generous Response principles
5. Promote fall retreats, register for Melchisedec Retreat
6. Record attendance for all worship services in October for Pastor Survey
7. Submit Bold Moves Applications
8. Elect/sustain and report congregational officers

→ SHARE MISSION CENTER CONFERENCE INFORMATION AND NEW BUSINESS

2014 GPNW-USA Mission Center Conference

Saturday, November 8, 9:45 am to Sunday, November 9, 12:30 pm

Portland Congregation, 4837 NE Couch St., Portland OR 97213.

Now is the time to promote the dates and location of Mission Center Conference in your bulletins each week. (See enclosed flyer with schedule.)

Conference Highlights

Our Conference theme is *Come and Bring Light*, based on the title of one of our new (and already favorite) hymns (CCS /#287) in *Community of Christ Sings!* ***Come and Bring Light*** is a humble invocation to God to "open our eyes" to the needs of people around us and "teach us compassion and love." Simultaneously to conducting our worship, fellowship and business of Mission Center Conference, we will officially "launch" our new hymnal, with Quorum of High Priests President and lead for the Hymnal Steering Team, High Priest **Jane Gardner**. Woven throughout the weekend, Jane will introduce new hymns, connect them to Community of Christ's identity, message and mission, and teach us how to use our hymnal resources.

Also joining us for guest ministry is President of Seventy **Robin Linkhart** and Western Field Ministry Specialist **John VanDerWalker**.

Special Events

- **Senior High Youth and Young Adult Dinner and Games**, Saturday, 6-10 pm, at Tuality Congregation.
- **New Hymnal Workshop**, Saturday, 7:30-9 pm, led by **Jane Gardner** with Mission Center musicians—open to all music and worship lovers, all ages and experience. Come learn and sing!
- **Hymn Festival**, Sunday, 9:30- 10:40 am, led by **Jane Gardner** and **Christian Skoorsmith**. Sing your way through Community of Christ theology and witness! (Just prior to 11 am ordination service.)

Proposed 2015 Budget, Funding Proposals, Priesthood Calls and Ordinations

In advance of Mission Center Conference, please share with your congregation new business being considered. At our Saturday business meeting, delegates will be asked to consider the proposed 2015 Mission Center Budget; a proposal to replenish the Alaska Travel Fund; and a proposal to help fund *Discipleship NOW*, a disciple

Pastor's Calendar / Checklist:

- Now**—Share Mission Center Conference information and new business
- Now**—Solicit names for MC Conference delegate nominations
- Now**—Promote Retreats: Northwest Singles Retreat, Sept. 26-28; Melchisedec Retreat, Sept. 26-28; Seventy Retreat, Oct. 3-5; Young Adult Retreat, Oct. 17-19; Sr. High Youth Retreat, Dec. 5-7
- Sept. 22**—Register for Melchisedec Retreat
- Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26**—Record attendance each Sunday
- By Oct. 15**—Submit Bold Moves applications
- By Oct. 19**—Hold MC Conference delegate elections
- By Oct. 21**—Report MC Conference delegates to Kim Naten
- By Oct. 31**—RSVP for Pastors' Breakfast in Portland
- After Nov. 9**—Schedule time for MC Conference delegate report
- By Nov. 23**—Hold congregational officer elections
- By Dec. 8**—Report 2015 congregational officers to Kim Naten and Kathy Sharp

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formation and mission-focused, three-year intensive experience for adults. Delegates also will bring affirming testimonies and sustain the priesthood calls of **Sean Langdon** (Eugene) and **Dorothy Wilgus** (Puyallup and Mossyrock Expansion Group) to Seventy. Both calls are already approved by the World Church Leadership Council. Assuming they are sustained, Sean and Dorothy will be ordained on Sunday morning.

Proposed 2015 Mission Center Budget

Enclosed with this letter is the **proposed 2015 Mission Center Budget** to share and review with your delegates and congregation prior to Mission Center Conference. This proposed 2015 budget is only seven tenths of one percent (0.7%) more than 2014. We are in the fortunate position of not being required to absorb any additional staff funding this year. Essentially all of our staff positions are being paid by the Mission Center, with the exception of the Mission Center President and Financial Officer positions. We are grateful for the ongoing funding provided by the World Church for those two positions and grateful to the Mission Center for providing funding for the rest of the staff positions, which allows us to provide ministry and support across the entire Mission Center.

Given the fluctuations of previous years' budgets, we have attempted to build some stability and consistency into the proposed budget. The 2015 proposed budget looks very similar to that of 2014. Only minor adjustments have been made to address specific issues or to create opportunities for missional partnering and leadership development. The proposed budget includes an allowance for a World Church recommended two percent (2%) pay increase for all staff (subject to approval by World Church HR Committee in November).

Due to the way in which some of the bookkeeping was recorded in 2013, a few budget items need explaining. The information in the enclosed financial report (Statement of Activity) is correct; however, to better align our budget and reporting, we are re-categorizing some items going into the future. Hence, the "Mission Center Conference" line for 2013 Actuals would have been about \$7,000, the Leadership Development line for 2013 Actuals would have been about \$7,000, and the income item Operating & Youth Contributions would have been about \$24,500. That makes the proposed budget amount for each of those lines more understandable for delegates. One additional change in the use of the Leadership Development line is offering a Pastors' Retreat every three years (beginning in spring 2015), with alternate years holding *Nuts and Bolts Workshops* for congregational leaders or preparation for World Conference for delegates and members.

Your Congregation's Proposed Allocation

The proposed 2015 Congregational Allocations are increasing on average by only one tenth of one percent (0.1%) compared with the 2014 allocations. We understand the financial challenges our congregations face and will continue to do all we can to provide excellent service to each congregation while keeping the allocations essentially the same as this year's.

The allocations are a starting point for expressing generosity toward the collective mission of the Mission Center. The formula used for the allocation does not include factors such as investment earnings or income from other sources such as facility rentals or fundraisers. To help keep allocations as low as possible, we are continuing to request additional contributions to the Mission Center from congregations that have additional capacity (Congregational Generosity), from emerging groups (Expansion Groups) and from members and friends of the Mission Center (Oper & Youth Contributions). We are grateful for the response so many have made and continue to make in support of our shared mission. To make up the remaining shortfall in the 2015 income budget, we anticipate an investment draw of \$15,500 above our usual 6% draw. This is less than half of the additional draw in the 2014 budget, but still represents a demand being put upon our investments that will reduce their value into the future. Our hope is to not need an additional draw for the 2016 budget.

Increases and decreases to congregational allocations are limited to ten percent (10%) to provide stability in budgeting for congregations. Your congregation's allocation will not increase or decrease by more than 10% when compared with this current year.

Enclosed with this letter is the **proposed 2015 allocation spreadsheet** for the congregations of the GPNW Mission Center. *To keep allocations low for congregations with financial challenges, the budget assumes that generous congregations, expansion groups and individual members and friends will close the GPNW Mission Center budget gap with additional contributions to the Mission Center above their allocated giving.* Bill McFarlin includes the criteria and rationale for the allocation computation along with the spreadsheet, which you can share with your members.

Based on the proposed 2015 budget, Bill has included your 2015 allocation with this letter and will post it on our GPNW website. Find it at www.cofchrist-gpnw.org/officers. This information will help you plan your 2015 congregational budget. If you have questions about the proposed budget or your congregation's allocation, contact Bill McFarlin, Mission Center Financial Officer, at 360-574-2758 or wmcfarlin@cofchrist-gpnw.org. (See enclosure.)

Alaska Travel Fund Resolution

The Alaska Travel Fund was established to help Alaskans participate in activities of the Mission Center and World Church, and to bring ministry to, with, and from folks in Alaska. Since the creation of the Alaska Travel Fund on January 1, 2012, 19 persons have accessed the fund a total of 51 times for purposes that include travel to and from events and activities such as Mission Center Conference, youth camp, youth camp counseling, Spectacular, Evangelist Blessing, ordination, World Conference, Alaska Task Force, workshops and retreats. More recently, the travel fund has been used to cover the costs of regular World Church ministry from High Priest John VanDerWalker, Western Field staff, and Seventy Christie Ostendorp, GPNW staff. Initially funded in the amount of \$65,000, after three years of use the current balance as of 8/31/2014 was \$26,307. The proposed resolution would add \$30,000 to the Alaska Travel Fund, allowing it to serve its purpose for the next several years, after which it will be re-evaluated again to ensure it is meeting the ministerial and spiritual needs of Community of Christ members and friends in Alaska. (*See enclosure.*)

Discipleship NOW Resolution

Before the conference is a resolution to partially fund *Discipleship NOW* with a startup fund of \$10,000 from the Operating Investment Fund, for members in GPNW. *Discipleship NOW* was developed in Inland West Mission Center, and the series has been offered several times in several Western field mission centers. *Discipleship NOW* is an ongoing adult disciple formation initiative designed to create connections between the sacred story, mission, each participant's everyday life, and the world we live in today. The three-year curriculum, mentoring and mission application, including retreats, are tailored to meet the needs of people who have a passion and calling to grow and develop on their path of discipleship. Costs associated with the program include travel expenses for instructors, local staff coordination time, retreat lodging and meals, workshop materials, and scholarship support, as needed. If this resolution passes, participants will be recruited for the first cohort and first retreat in May 2015. (*See enclosure.*)

→ SOLICIT NAMES FOR NOMINATION, ELECT AND REPORT MISSION CENTER CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Solicit names now for your congregation's Mission Center Conference delegate nominations. Announce your congregational business meeting to elect Conference delegates and alternates at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This business meeting should occur *no later* than **Sunday, October 19**. Any member "in good standing" with membership within the GPNW Mission Center is eligible to run for delegate.

List all nominations on a prepared ballot, which also notes the number of delegates to elect from your congregation. Members may nominate others as "write-ins" during the business meeting and may vote for as many nominees *as can be elected*. Those receiving the most votes—up to the number of delegates allotted to your congregation—are elected. (*See enclosure with your updated delegate allotment.*) Remaining nominees will serve as alternates, in descending order of votes received. We often are able to change alternates into voting delegates from other congregations before Conference.

Immediately notify your delegates and alternates of their election. Report the names of your elected delegates and your alternates (prioritized by highest to lowest votes received) to Kim Naten, Mission Center Recorder, by Tuesday, October 21. (*Please use enclosed delegate submittal form; information can also be emailed.*) If you are unable to elect your full delegate allotment, inform Kim whether your delegate openings can be filled by elected alternates from a specific congregation or by any alternates. Contact Kim at knaten@cofchrist-gpnw.org or 360-748-3562.

Please schedule congregational time AFTER Mission Center Conference for your delegates to report action by the Conference to your congregation.

→ RSVP TO PASTORS' BREAKFAST

Pastors, register now for our annual **Pastor's Breakfast** at 7:30 am, **Sunday, November 9**, at The Grotto, a Catholic spiritual and event center. Due to space limitations, each congregation will be allotted two seats at the breakfast. If you are part of a co-pastor or shared leadership team, decide among yourselves who will attend and register those names. All pastors will receive the thank-you gift, whether or not they attend the breakfast. (If there are additional seats available once the registration deadline has passed, we will send out an additional emailed invitation to register for those extra seats.) The Grotto Conference Center is located near Portland Congregation at North East Sandy Boulevard and North East 85th Avenue (www.thegrotto.org). Look for your invitation in this packet, and again by email, and remember to register as indicated by **Friday, October 24**.

→ INVITE BISHOP MCFARLIN INTO YOUR CONGREGATION FOR A CONVERSATION AND PRESENTATION ON THE PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLES' GENEROUS RESPONSE.

Many of you participated in the Nuts & Bolts Workshop earlier this year and saw the material Bishop McFarlin presented regarding Disciples' Generous Response and Stewardship. That was just a glimpse of those important topics in the life of the church. Please invite Bill into your congregation for a presentation and conversation with your members to help deepen our collective understanding and living of these discipleship principles.

→ PROMOTE FALL RETREATS, REGISTER FOR MELCHISEDEC RETREAT

We have a number of retreats this fall throughout the Mission Center. Please help us promote these events by posting the enclosed flyers and announcing them in your bulletins. Be sure to register by September 22 for the Melchisedec and Companions Retreat, to be held September 26-28 at Tuality Congregation. (*See enclosures.*)

→ RECORD ATTENDANCE FOR ALL WORSHIP SERVICES IN OCTOBER FOR PASTOR SURVEY

The purpose of this annual survey is to track key measures of congregational life, over time, across the Mission Center. Please track your congregation's attendance for each regular worship service in October. Your Congregational Support Minister will arrange a telephone call with you in November to discuss, interpret, receive and report this information to the Mission Center. Your CSM is responsible for the completion and submission of the survey; you only need to speak with them and provide the input. Deadline to have all Pastor Surveys completed and submitted is **Friday, December 5.**

→ SUBMIT BOLD MOVES APPLICATIONS

The Bold Moves Grant Committee awarded new grants to several congregations last spring. Now is the time for others to start working on new or renewing grant applications, due **Tuesday, October 15.** Previous grant winners may reapply two more times. Find information under "Ministries > Bold Moves" on our Mission Center website (www.cofchrist-gpnw.org) or contact **Steve Pomeroy**, spomeroy@cofchrist-gpnw.org, for help. Links to World Church and Western Field grants for Mission and Tangible Love also can be found on this webpage, so you can supplement Bold Moves funds for bigger projects.

→ ELECT/SUSTAIN AND REPORT CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

Coordinate now with your Congregational Support Minister to schedule pastor elections and sustain your recorder, congregational financial officer and assistant pastors. Announce this business meeting at least two weeks in advance. By now you should have received appointment letters for your recorder and CFO from Bill McFarlin. If you are stepping down as pastor for 2015, please notify your Congregational Support Minister and me as soon as possible to identify your likely successor(s). Officer elections should occur by **Sunday, November 23** (before the Advent season) to allow for sufficient planning, recruiting and budgeting. Please notify Kim Naten (knaten@cofchrist-gpnw.org) and copy me (ksharp@cofchrist-gpnw.org) with your election results by **Monday, December 8.**

This fall letter gives you lots to pray, think, plan, decide, attend and do with your congregation and Mission Center members over the next few weeks. And, as always, call or email me with your concerns, questions and excitement. Thank you for your continued, faithful ministry in the name of Jesus Christ! I look forward to seeing you all in Portland at our Mission Center Conference and Pastors' Breakfast. Now and forever, may Christ's peace resonate within and through you.


Kathy Sharp

Enclosures:

- MC Conference: Flyer with Schedule
- MC Conference: Sr, High Youth/Young Adult Flyer
- MC Conference: Proposed 2015 Mission Center Budget
- MC Conference: Statement of Activity
- MC Conference: Proposed 2015 Congregational Allocations
- MC Conference: Understanding Your Congregational Allocation
- MC Conference: Proposed Alaska Travel Fund Resolution
- MC Conference: Proposed *Discipleship NOW* Resolution
- MC Conference: Delegate Allotment and Formula
- MC Conference: Delegate-Alternate Submittal Form
- MC Conference: Pastors' Breakfast Invitation to Pastors
- Northwest Singles Fall 2014 Retreat Flyer
- Melchisedec Fall 2014 Retreat Flyer
- Seventy Fall 2014 Retreat Flyer
- Young Adult Fall 2014 Retreat Flyer
- Visiting Ministry 4th Quarter 2014 Schedule