

Synod of Living Waters Coordinating Team Report by Martha Knichel, Rep. to the CCT October 2009

This has been a very exciting year, with many meetings and a lot of travel. My term on the Churchwide Coordinating Team (CCT) as your Synod Representative started with the first meeting in August 2008. There has been much water under the bridge since that time. I will try to give you a break down, without boring you.

AUGUST

At my first meeting of CCT, not really knowing what to expect, I was asked to serve on the Mission Relations Committee (MRC) and transition into the position of Chair when the current Chair finished her term on the CCT in July 2009. I thought to myself this would be “a piece of cake”. Three other committees report to the MRC. They are The Creative Ministries Offering Committee (CMOC) (Birthday Offering and Thank Offering), Global Exchange Committee, and the USA Mission Experience Committee (USAME). I was also asked to serve on the CMOC and the USAME. I am still thinking about “the piece of cake” at this point! Only the MRC meets at the same time as the CCT.

SEPTEMBER 2008

The CMOC meets twice a year to decide what projects will receive the Birthday Offering and Thank Offering grants. In September 2008, I was again flying to Louisville to help choose the Birthday Offering recipients. There were thirty-two applications for the grants. You must read each of the applications and then you have to do more research for eight or nine of the applications. This involves hours and hours of reading. The committee is a great one to serve on, but it is hard to say “no” to most and “yes” to only two of the applicants.

OCTOBER 2008

I was also assigned to the Churchwide Gathering Planning Team and the Business Committee for the Gathering. This committee met in October 2008. This was an interesting committee to serve on because you have to make sure that everything that will come up in the Business Meeting is taken care of. This includes certifying all of the Voting Representatives, making sure that there are enough tellers to assist with the meeting, and the like.

FEBRUARY 2009

This meeting started with the Bible Study Committee. At first, I wondered, "What am I doing here? I am not a Bible scholar!" The committee for the year before had chosen the subject and this year's committee chose the author. The subject for the next Bible Study was also chosen. These choices are made five years before the study is ready for PW to study. The CCT meeting followed, and we were off on a marathon of meetings that would keep me in Louisville for two weeks. The Gathering Planning Team meeting was followed by the CMOC meeting to decide the Thank Offering recipients. There were sixty-nine applications to read this time, but we were able to grant twenty-seven grants. Snow was predicted in Louisville, but it was only a light dusting. The real snow came to Memphis on March 1, the day that I returned home. Our area awoke to ten inches of the white stuff, but never the less, it was good to be back home, and I was finished eating hotel food, at least for a while.

JUNE

I represented PW at the Bread for the World Conference in Washington, DC. I was the only one from the CCT to attend and began to feel like a fish out of water. It was a good Conference, with many great speakers, and so much wonderful music. We went to Capital Hill to lobby our Senators and Congressmen. This was very new to me, as I had never lobbied for anything before. I was only able to meet with the Aids for the Senators, but Travis Childers, my Congressman, met with me for forty-five minutes. I was surprised that he would take that much time to meet with me. That was the high light of the trip. By the way, a week or so after getting home, a woman from the Bread for the World office called and said that someone had made a good picture of me while at the conference, and asked if it would be okay if they used it in a brochure. I told her it would be fine, if it was a good picture. You will have to see it.

JULY

July is Churchwide Gathering time, and it was just wonderful. Our first event was the Global Gala. All the Global Exchange participants, our Global partners, and the CCT members meet for a nice dinner and entertainment by the Global partners. Bligh Jones was the Chair of the Plenary sessions, and those were the best Plenaries that I have ever attended! The big news of the Gathering Business meeting was the election of new leaders and the affirmative vote for incorporation of PW. When you are on the Gathering Planning Team, you have many jobs to do, so there is not a great amount of time for "Gathering fun." Nevertheless, seeing old friends and making new friends is wonderful, even when your time is filled from early morning to late at night.

AUGUST

It was time for the CMOC to meet again and decide the Birthday Offering recipients. This is a small committee and even with much reading to do, it is a fun group. There are two members of the General Assembly Council (GAC) who serve on this committee. Some of you may know The Rev. Reg Parsons, who served in the First Presbyterian Church in Starkville, MS, for a number of years. He is one of the GAC members (now the Synod Executive for the Synod of the South Atlantic) and being the only male, he brings a lot of extra fun. Each member is to investigate only eight or nine of the applications for more information. Forgetting this little fact, he investigated all thirty-three applicants. He was a great resource of information and the cause of much laughter.

SEPTEMBER

The newly elected leaders were ready for their first CCT meeting. I am pleased with our new Moderator Team and think they will be able to work well together. Alice Wyatt, Vice Moderator for Missions, serves on the MRC, the committee that I Chair, and I have found her to be great to work with. She will be assisting me with leading a workshop at the World Mission Celebration on October 22-24. During the meeting, I was given the assignment of representing PW on the Medical Benevolence Foundation Board. Following the CCT meeting three other CCT members, Kathy Reeves, the staff person for the MRC, and I went to Sioux Falls, SD, to meet with three of our Native American sisters. We were there to make plans for the USA Mission Experience to that area in September 2010. You can look for more information to be published in the very near future about this opportunity.

This is a thumbnail sketch of how I have been spending my time for the last year. It has been a great pleasure to represent you on the CCT! Thank you.