

PSD Annual Conference 2013: “Inspire the Future We Envision”
PROGRAM PLANNING COMMITTEE DEBRIEF
Sunday, April 7, 2013
Cedar Rapids, IA

Attending: Robin Taylor (Chair), Nancy Heege (PSD Executive Director), Rev. Lisa Doege, Julie Enersen, Ginny Malcomson, Phil and Joanne Roudebush (2014 LAC Co-Chairs), Ben Wallace, Maria Wilson, Graham Krieker; Robyn Miessler-Kubanek (2013 LAC Chair), Rev. Tom Capo, and many people from the Cedar Rapids 2013 LAC Team.

We began the meeting by raising a giant whoop of celebration for a fantastic conference, and then asked people to share their personal highlights from the conference. (We may want to use some of these in publicizing next year’s conference!)

- ~ listening to the young woman who spoke at the Youth Service
- ~ great connections with people from around the district
- ~ seeing old friends; making new ones
- ~ watching how much fun people were having
- ~ being part of a bigger gathering
- ~ the joy of the Sunday service (with so many people!!)
- ~ the historic moment of the unanimous vote for Regionalization
- ~ Jim Coppoc’s workshop on mixing music and the message to create a whole
- ~ the support we received from working with people from last year’s LAC
- ~ the chocolate mousse cake at dinner!
- ~ the chance to try new things (like singing tenor! And sampling NIA!)
- ~ the sense that the theme was woven into everything from start to finish
- ~ the chance to be active (with yoga, NIA, CUUPS worship and other Reflect & Connect activities at the end of the day)

Things that were recommended to do next year have been highlighted in yellow. Actions that are pending are highlighted in aqua.

Robyn reported for the DRE and Youth Advisor that the youth and children’s activities went very well. The only glitch was that one of the youth had signed up for choir, and the rest of the group thought she was “missing.” Rev. Tom asked for a report on the children’s and youth activities.

Heather Dee, Hotel Liaison, commented that she wish she had known more about the youth activities—it would have been helpful to answer questions for others. Recommendation: more pre-conference information would have been very helpful for parents—and volunteers!

Susan E-B, Registrar, said they had extended registration past the printed date, which made for some difficulties in printing the packets. Some names got lost if they registered after the packets were printed. Recommendations: two registrars, and have them involved FROM THE BEGINNING in the planning for the conference so they are aware of all the different aspects of the conference. She also said that she was unprepared for how much she would be needed to answer questions at the registration table on the day of the conference! There were people who showed up and wanted extra meals for a friend, and they did not have a good process for handling those requests this year. Roger recommended having a computer and a printer on the spot (early, so you can make sure it is working), as well as a master printout, and extra packets and blank nametags ready to go for late registrations. He was also given extra meal tickets to use at his discretion.

Tom H. and Bob B., Bookstore, said things went pretty well. They got great advice from last year’s Bookstore people, and sold 22 titles as suggested by workshop presenters, speakers, and the UUA. Because they were able to handle credit cards, they kept having to handle late

registrations. Recommendation: have separate credit card processing for the bookstore and the registration table in the future, as it got a little confusing.

Exhibits ~ Local Arrangements doesn't really have any control over who applies for a table. It was difficult to know who qualified for the PSD "no fee" and who didn't, and what having a table meant. Rev. Tom invited some social justice organizations to have tables at the last minute, like Amnesty International. They were pleased to be there. Phil said the only way he knew he was having a table is because Robyn connected with him to tell him how to register.

Recommendations: 1) review registration form for next year to ensure clarity, 2) actively recruit exhibits that would fit in well with conference, and 3) apply for a grant from the Visitors and Convention Bureau (Tom said he got \$500!).

AV *~ Went very smoothly. Sound was great and picture was very clear. Robyn said it helped to have someone in the congregation who owned cameras and could save them \$5,000. Rev. Tom said it was so important to have someone you could depend on. There were a few things that the AV person felt could have made his job a lot easier. Tom will get a list from him and make sure the Topeka LAC people get it. Phil noted that black was a difficult color for the background fabric for filming purposes. He recommended finding someone to consult on lighting and stage design to enhance the live streaming.

*Joanne raised the question of who pays for the live-streaming and the cost of setting things up? As a region, we might want to think about how this expense is shared by the people who will be watching it next year but not attending in person.

Food ~ Heather thought the food went very well. A member of the congregation helped them to design the dinner menu so that it would be acceptable for vegans, vegetarians, and gluten-intolerant people. Recommendation: Roger pointed out the importance of asking the hotel to work with you beyond the menu they present. Tell them your budget, and get them to be more creative. Robyn said that if people had a special food need, they had to talk to the servers.

Reflect and Connect ~ Seemed to be very much appreciated at the end of a long day. About 30 people came to Nia and 15 or so to yoga. (Robyn-Any idea how many came to the CUUPS worship?) The writing instructor misunderstood, and stayed in the business meeting, so he wasn't there at the start of the writing session, and nobody was there when he arrived. Robin reported that several people enjoyed the opportunity to visit with Stefan Jonasson in an informal setting, and people were able to come and go as they pleased. People were extremely grateful for the chance to MOVE, go for a walk, grab a drink before dinner, or chill in their rooms. Recommendation: Offer Reflect and Connect again!

Scholarships ~ Nancy said they did a lot to make the recipients aware of how to get their scholarship checks, but the people at the registration table were not aware of it. Recommendation: Next year, have a stock answer prepared for the people working at registration on how to get their scholarship checks!

Robin closed the meeting by thanking everyone again, and asking everyone to share a recommendation for next year's meeting:

Ginny ~ Suggest that people bring their own refillable coffee mugs, water bottles from home.

Ben ~ Could we have the sermon contest winner more integrated into the program?

Julie ~ Have more singing together on Friday night—it has an energizing effect on attendees.

Ginny ~ Have a room monitor for each workshop: someone who can introduce the speaker, count the attendees, keep an eye on the clock, and run for anything that is needed. This volunteer would get the chance to "attend" the workshop for free.

Maria ~ involve the Friday evening musicians in the Opening program so people had a chance to hear them before they were relegated to mere "background music."

Graham ~ contact the people who came last year and find out why they didn't come this year? Could help us plan better next year.

Phil ~ Thinking about commissioning a song for the meeting that could be taught Friday night and sung throughout the weekend to build community and integrate the theme.

Bob ~ Tom brought a bunch of books from the church library to the bookstore table and labeled them "Free." It was a big hit, and attracted people to the table. He suggested, "Take a book, leave a bill."

Kathy ~ It was nice to be able to grab someone in an orange hat—easy to see if you needed help.

Robyn ~ It would be nice to have a "Resource Table" from the LAC church, attended by a person in an orange hat to answer questions. Could have maps, directions for things off-site.

Heather ~ I tried to be available to put out fires, but there weren't many fires to put out. I wish I'd gone to at least one workshop!

Susan ~ I think the registrar should have had a co-chair—it is a big job for one person. Also, find out where the hidden bathrooms are! The hotel had some that were not on the site map!

(Volunteers also need to be able to locate the ATMs, Business Center, and vending machines!)

Tom ~ Children's program is very important if we want to make this a multigenerational experience, and we want children to come back! We should talk to parents about their children's experience... Need to get child care workers who have had proper background checks.

Joanne ~ we lose money on children's programming. If we want quality programming, we need to find out if parents are willing to pay for it.

Lisa ~ for those who are short, it was very hard to read the words for the hymns on the screen. Maybe only use the top couple lines at a time, so people can see over other heads?

Marion ~ Good to have an activity that gets people out of their heads and out of their seats.

Tom ~ The "Foodie Group" took care of providing dinner for the Board Meeting, and the vegan group took care of lunch at the church.

Nancy & Kathy ~ The Business Meeting and the planning of the vote was very well done.

Robin ~ It would be nice to do something more with the winning sermon. Wonderful to have it read in the pulpits on Conference Sunday so ministers were free for the day. And it was very nice to have her as a backup speaker, although her 20-minute sermon would not have filled the hour-long spot!

Thank you for your wonderful recommendations, everyone! And thank you ALL for your part in making this a fantastic conference!

Next committee meeting will be a virtual one on SATURDAY, MAY 4TH. We will meet from 10a.m. to Noon to go over the Survey Monkey results, and Nancy Combs-Morgan would like to join us to propose adding a social witness aspect to the program for youth and young adults. We will continue in the afternoon from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to continue planning for Topeka 2014.

Our summer meeting will be a **site visit to Topeka on Saturday, August 10th**. (Back-up date will be Aug. 17th)

I will send out a Meeting Wizard to figure out when we can meet in October, but I'm looking at **October 12 or 19th**.

When you have finished reading the minutes, please email me to say "I approve the minutes" or to make any corrections: robinestaylor@gmail.com This will save time at the next meeting!

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Taylor, Chair
April 25, 2013

