

Report on 2022 April 7 MLHABC Annual Meeting submitted by Kathy Root Parr

The Middlesex Lambton Huron Association Baptist Churches Council held their Annual Meeting over Zoom Thursday April 7 at 7:00 pm. Westview was well represented with Harvey Park, Charlene Root and myself in attendance with over 20 others.

Ken Foo, CBOQ new Director of Church Life and Leadership was guest speaker reflecting on Ephesians 4:1-13 about what it means to be the church. He encouraged us to consider the purpose of our individual churches. Why do we exist? What are people coming back for? Is it worth it? Ken reminded us that our reason for being is to make disciples and suggested “the main thing needs to be the main thing”. Don’t get distracted by things that don’t matter as much as keeping God at the center of our church life.

Reports were received from most of the committees as well as the Moderator reviewing their activities in 2021. Ruthe and Kathy also submitted a Progress Report on our Indigenous Learning Event: Walking Together in a Good Way and First Oneida Baptist Church reported on their recent break-in and fire.

Here are some highlights and things Westview needs to know:

- **First Oneida Baptist Church** – already needed to replace their roof before the fire and had been gathering funds to repair it (currently about \$5,000). They have no insurance on the building. Harvey Park spent some time inspecting the structural integrity after the fire and found it to be sound. The damage is mostly from smoke (anything paper (hymn books, bibles, etc) or cloth (curtains) needs replacing. Clean up is underway. They are meeting in a Fellowship Baptist Church until they can return.
 - MLHA voted to immediately give \$1,000 toward the repairs
 - More information will come to the MLHA churches soon re: what kind of help and materials are needed
 - CBWOQ Executive Director, Helena Bergen, inspected the site and hopes Baptist Women will take on the challenge of replacing the kitchen and its contents

Note: even though Oneida has spent much of the pandemic in lock down, they recently had two baptisms and 3 new members. The spiritual health of the congregation is good.

- **Dues** – non were collected in 2021 because so little was happening and Association Churches were busy managing COVID but they will be collected for 2022. Information will come from the Association soon.
- **Mission Fest 2022** – hopes to be a combination in-person/zoom event on the 1st or 2nd Saturday in November with a focus on Bolivia. They are looking for a venue with reliable internet ability.
- **MLHA Church News** – in 2021 Forest Baptist Church left the Association and CBOQ to join another organization and Maitland St. Community Church closed. Searching for lead pastor are: Central Sarnia (Interim: Alex Moir), Wyoming (Interim: Eric Campbell) and Westview (Interim: Das Sydney)
- **Next MLHA Council Meeting** is set for **Thursday September 13** – it was decided to meet over Zoom so people can plan to attend the Indigenous Learning Event September 23-25 at Westview without having to travel twice within two weeks. The CBM committee hopes to have one or two speakers from Bolivia at that Council Meeting to talk about the projects and stimulate interest coming up to Mission Fest

- **Walking Together in a Good Way** - there is strong support and enthusiasm for this conference from the Association. Here is the Progress Report we submitted.

Update:

Our planning committee continues to meet and work on organizing this event. We have confirmed most of our major presenters and breakout session leaders. In our efforts to further people's understanding of the truth of our history, our presenters will be covering topics including:

- Historical and Treaty information (including a shorter "Blanket Exercise")
- Relation to the Land
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission & 94 Calls to Action
- Ongoing impact of Residential Schools and Indian Day Schools
- Colonialism and its continued effect on Indigenous people
- 60's Scoop
- Inequality in legal system, healthcare, education
- Indigenous Arts, Crafts, Music and Dance
- Indigenous Ceremony

Financial support has been pledged by:

- Middlesex-Lambton-Huron Association
- Elgin Association
- CBOQ
- CBM
- Westview Baptist Church (space and custodial costs)
- Other fundraising projects (stay tuned!)

It is our hope that this entire weekend will be an experience of Indigenous culture and history, including the food, which will be provided by a local Indigenous caterer.

The cost for this event is **\$100/person**, which includes 3 meals and 3 breaks. We are grateful that MLHA has generously offered to cover 90% of the registration cost for young people from MLHA churches up to 30yrs old and that Westview can also apply for a subsidy for up to 10 people who require financial assistance to attend.

The number of unmarked burial sites of children who attended Residential School is now over 10,000. There are many more sites to be investigated. We need to listen to Indigenous people to learn the truth of our history if any change will be possible going forward.

We are excited about this event and the opportunity that participants will have to hear from local Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Historians, Leaders, and others. We continue to be impressed by their grace, patience and willingness to share with us. It is our hope that each person who attends will go away with a clearer understanding of the truth and committed to helpful, practical steps to be part of the solution.

Please note the change of date (from May to **September 23-25**).

Registration begins June 21. Go to www.westviewbaptist.ca and look for our logo.

