

Report of the 37th Meeting of the Montana Association of Churches

The Montana Association of Churches (MAC) held their annual meeting on October 18 and 19 in Great Falls. Yellowstone Presbytery delegates were Douglas Johnson and Celia VandeCreek. The assembly was convened by President Dan Krebill on Monday morning. Representatives from the eight participating mainline denominations as well as five judicatory executives plus assorted guests attended. Guests from our Presbytery were Doris and Paul Krebill and Larry VandeCreek

Business meetings included committee reports of the various committees. MAC has regained financial stability after special problems in recent years. Also, having a competent administrator continuing in her third year has been an asset. For the upcoming 2011 Montana state legislative session, MAC determined to focus its efforts on passage of the abolition of the death penalty bill. To this end, MAC hired Jim Brown as lobbyist to work on this issue. Mr. Brown is an attorney from Dillon with extensive experience working with legislators both at the federal and state level. He will work in conjunction with the Montana Abolition Coalition.

The principal plenary speaker was Janice Springer, a pastor in the United Church of Christ currently serving a church in Missoula. She led four workshops around the theme I Know We're All Welcome at the Table, But Do I Have to Sit Next to You? These workshops addressed issues relating to living at peace with those people in our lives whose religion, politics, or personal issues differ sharply with us. She challenged the group to seek justice without making our opponent an enemy. Each session consisted of several break-out times of direct interaction in groups of two to four persons.

The Rev Patti Duckworth, regional executive of the American Baptist Churches, preached at the ecumenical worship service. She asserted the centrality of Christ to all our faith traditions and held before the assembly the disciplines and attitudes that achieve unity in Christ and further His work in the world.

This 37th annual assembly of MAC was considerably energized by the contribution and presence of numerous new, young representatives, both clergy and lay. Their vitality added a special spark to the meeting and gave credence to hope for the future in the joy of working in ecumenical ministry in the state of Montana.

Respectfully Submitted

Celia VandeCreek