

## Conference Calendar

### MAR

- 7 Regional Meeting for Delegates, Oak Grove Mennonite, West Liberty
- 23-24 Missional Conference with Alan and Debra Hirsch, Kidron Mennonite
- 24-25 Annual Conference Assembly, Central Christian School, Kidron
- 31 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### APR

- 1-2 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 8 Spring Day of Inspiration, Ohio Mennonite Women, Crown Hill Mennonite, Rittman

### MAY

- 6 Worship Resourcing Seminar, Sonnenberg Mennonite, Kidron

### JUN

- 16-18 Hispanic Families Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### JUL

- 4-8 Mennonite Church USA Convention, Orlando, Florida

## Podcasts feature missional stories

Ohio Conference Cast hosts Bill Seymour and Thomas Dunn are traveling to Ohio Conference regional meetings to hear stories of congregations engaging in mission. You can listen to these latest podcasts on iTunes (search for Ohio Conference Cast), or listen from the Ohio Conference website: <https://ohiomennoniteconference.org/podcasts>.



With hosts Thomas Dunn and Bill Seymour

Ohio Conference bulletin inserts are published six times per year by Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

For more information about the Ohio Conference, see the Conference website: [www.ohiomennoniteconference.org](http://www.ohiomennoniteconference.org)  
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FEBRUARY 2017

*Friday night worship service is free and open to all*

## 'Who is my Neighbor?' is theme of missional conference

As part of the Ohio Conference Year of Mission, the Conference is offering another opportunity for people to learn more about participating in God's mission right in their own neighborhoods.

"Who is my Neighbor?" is the theme for the upcoming Ohio Conference Missional Conference with Alan and Debra Hirsch. This two-day event will take place March 23-24, 2017, at Kidron Mennonite Church prior to Annual Conference Assembly.

This missional conference will focus on a variety of topics:

- Inviting all people in so they feel that they have a place to just be and feel loved
- Leading with embrace rather than theology
- Respecting high standards while extending grace



Alan and Debra Hirsch

- Engaging third places
- Christ and the Gospel as core for mission and church life

The missional conference will conclude with a worship service on Friday evening, March 24, at Central Christian School in Kidron, beginning at 7 p.m. **Alan and Debra Hirsch will be the speakers for this worship service, which is free and open to**

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*Supporting healthy, growing congregations*

## Gaining fluency in missional language

By Rick Stoner  
Pastor  
Sharon Mennonite Church

The pastor, theologian, and poet, Eugene Peterson, has said that we use words, and in turn words begin to use us. This makes sense because language is not used in a vacuum but has creative power to shape the world around us.

However, there are times that words can be used so often and in

so many different ways that the power of the word itself diminishes. This can certainly be the case with the word “missional.” Missional is a catch word that is thrown about in many circles these days, and has become so watered down in many cases that mission scholars no longer find it to be a useful word to use. Today what passes for “missional” conversation is more concerned with attractional strategy, yet the missional movement

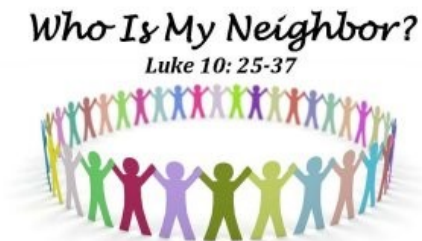
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## Missional conference

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everyone, even those who are not registered for the missional conference or Annual Conference Assembly. (This worship service also will mark the beginning of Annual Conference Assembly.)

Cost for the missional conference will be \$40 for Ohio Conference members attending Annual Conference Assembly, \$55 for other Ohio Conference members, and \$85 for non-Ohio Conference members.



Participants ages 30 and younger will receive a half-price discount on the cost of registration. Planners of the conference are encouraging all congregations to cover the cost of registration for their young adults interested in attending.

To learn more about this event, see <http://bit.ly/2017MissionalConference>. Online registration is available for this event. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2017MissionalConferenceRegistration>. Please register by **March 3**.

## Missional language

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was not about strategy. Instead it was born out of a desire to incarnate in local contexts. **So what do we mean when we talk about missional theology?**

Drawing on the work of Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J Zscheile in their book *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, **here are four broad themes that are at the core of the term “missional”:**

1. God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world.
2. God’s mission in the world is related to the reign (kingdom) of God.
3. The missional church is an incarnational (versus an attractional) ministry sent to engage a post-modern, post-Christendom, globalized context.

4. The internal life of the missional church focuses on every believer living as a disciple engaging in mission.

In short, although this word is often used in pragmatic ways to talk about activities of the church, at its core missional means how the mission and church are in partnership with one another and how the congregation is joining with God’s mission.

Two additional buzzwords that appear in the above themes are post-modern and post-Christendom:

Post-Christendom — The shift in culture where the Church has moved from the center of society to the margins of society.

Postmodern — The form of culture that is characterized by a return to narrative and pluralism with a shift away from modernity’s grand unified theory.

## Learn about Alan Hirsch via video

Are you interested in learning more about Alan Hirsch? For a brief video featuring Alan Hirsch, go to <http://bit.ly/AlanHirschDiscipleship>. In this short video (about four minutes long), he talks about evangelism, discipleship and mission.

