

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

JAN/FEB 2017



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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Delegates to consider Assembly theme: 'Who is my Neighbor?'

Central Christian to host ACA

Central Christian School in Kidron will host the 2017 Ohio Conference Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) March 24-25. "Who is my Neighbor?" will be the theme of this year's Assembly. The theme is based on Luke 10:25-37.

This year ACA will be preceded by a missional conference at Kidron Mennonite Church featuring Alan and Debra Hirsch. (See the article below and pages 4-5 for

more information.)

Registration for ACA will begin Friday at 5:30 p.m. A worship service held in the Performing Arts Center at

Central Christian will serve as both the first event of ACA, as well as the concluding event for the missional

Continued on page 3

Who Is My Neighbor?

Luke 10: 25-37



Who are Alan and Debra Hirsch?

By Jacob Dodson
Pastor
Wooster Mennonite Church

One of the highlights of the Year of Mission is the pre-ACA missional training event with Alan and Debra Hirsch. You may have seen their names in missional books or Ohio Conference publications,

but here is some biographical information about them. Alan was born in South Africa and grew up in Cape Town. As an adult, he moved to Australia, where he experienced a powerful change in his life



Alan and Debra Hirsch

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Editor: Ann H. Leaman

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EDITORIAL

Evangel to be distributed electronically

As is the case with most people, I can find change pretty uncomfortable. And yet, my life is fairly full of changes, even though I have lived in the same house for more than two decades. When I think back to the time when I began working for the Ohio Conference, it is striking how many things have changed in the way that I do my work. We have dropped old ways of doing things — goodbye, fax machine — and adopted many new tools and practices.

Now another change is coming. This issue of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* is the last which will be professionally

printed and mailed through the United States Postal Service. Beginning with the March-April issue, *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* will be sent electronically to congregations, and each congregation will be asked to distribute the issue to members. (Individuals also can request that *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* be emailed directly to them. If you would like to be placed on the email distribution list, send an email message to ohioevangel@gmail.com.)

The Ohio Conference Leadership Team primarily made the decision to discontinue printing *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* as a cost-

cutting measure in response to financial difficulties. However, this move also will address another issue — problems with mailing. In the past year, numerous congregations have reported receiving damaged copies and receiving only partial shipments, as well as experiencing extremely slow mailing times. In one case, a congregation received the September-October issue only a few days before the November-December issue. Electronic delivery will ensure that congregations receive *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* in a more timely manner.

— ahl

OMW seeks new board members

Attention all women! We are looking for women to serve on the Executive Board of Ohio Mennonite Women. We seek women who believe in our mission to connect Mennonite women in Ohio by planning meaningful spiritual and social events. We coordinate

opportunities for women to support missions both locally and globally. Please consider serving in this way. Thank you. Several positions are currently vacant: Vice-Chair/Chair-elect, Secretary, Jamboree/Retreat Coordinator, and

Day of Inspiration Coordinator. If you are interested in serving, contact Willie Stoltzfus at stoltzfus.willie@gmail.com or 937-935-2642 (cell) or Roxanne Kauffman at roxykauff@gmail.com or 937-539-8527 (cell). ■

Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

- Moderator: Bob Sauder — sauderbob2@gmail.com
- Assistant Moderator: Thomas Dunn — thomas@crownhillmennonite.com
- Credentialing Ministry Chair: Dan Hooley — danhooley@sbcglobal.net
- Gifts Discernment Ministry Chair: Mel Hathaway — smcpastor@embarqmail.com
- Stewardship Ministry Chair: Melanie Miller — mgfmiller@gmail.com
- Regional Pastor: Ralph Reinford — ralphreinford@gmail.com
- Regional Pastor: Cliff Brubaker — cliffbru7@gmail.com
- Year of Covenant Facilitator: George O'Reilly — pastorgeorgeoreilly@gmail.com
- Administrative Secretary: Judy King — ohmc@zoominternet.net
- Financial Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — cbohl@zoominternet.net
- Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@gmail.com
- Coordinator of Volunteers: Alys Short — alyshort@gmail.com

ACA Continued from page 1

conference. Alan and Debra Hirsch will be the featured speakers for this worship service. ACA will conclude at 3 p.m. Saturday after the final business session.

In addition to the Friday evening worship service and business sessions for delegates, ACA will include a special time for prayer on Saturday morning, and displays. Because this year's Assembly will take place over a shorter time period than last year, there will be no workshops.

On Saturday morning, a Mennonite Men's breakfast and an Ohio Mennonite Women's breakfast will take place at the Dutch Kitchen in nearby Dal-

ton. Lyle Troyer of Peace Mennonite Church in Elyria will be the speaker for the men's breakfast, focusing on the topic "Under Construction."

Dottie Hathaway of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron will be the speaker for the women's breakfast. Her topic will be "There's a Hole in my Bucket," and she will be looking at several biblical women who may or may not always have had it together.

Registration forms and more information about ACA are



available on the Ohio Conference website: www.ohiomennoniteconference.org. The website also has a link to online registration.

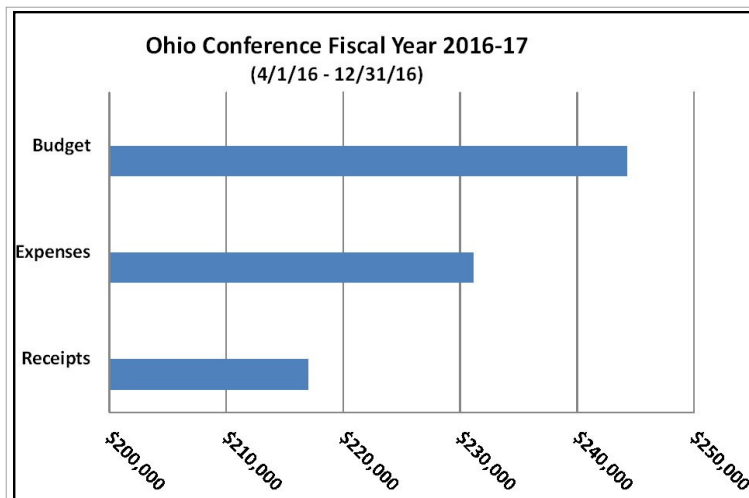
Registration fees for ACA are \$30 per person if received by March 3 and \$45 per person after that date. ■

Deficit continues despite stronger giving in December

Giving to the Ohio Conference in December was stronger than in any other month of the 2016-17 fiscal year, according to figures provided by Conference Financial Coordinator Stan Helmuth.

Total receipts for the month of December were \$42,212, including \$8,950 in year-end giving from individuals in response to an appeal from Conference leadership. Our thanks go out to all those individuals who contributed.

Congregational giving in December totaled \$33,250, the largest monthly amount for the fiscal year so far.



Total expenses for the month were \$29,341, leaving an operating surplus of \$12,871 for the month. However, the Conference is still experiencing a defi-

cit for this fiscal year. As of Dec. 31, the Conference's operating balance was -\$14,165. The Conference fiscal year ends March 31, 2017. ■

Missional conference to precede ACA

During the Ohio Conference Year of Mission (2016-17), the Conference has been encouraging people to think about how they and their congregations can participate in God's mission right in their own communities.

This March, as part of this mission emphasis, Ohio Conference is sponsoring a Missional Conference with Alan and Debra Hirsch. The conference will take place at Kidron Mennonite Church on March 23-24, immediately prior to Ohio Conference's Annual Conference Assembly.

The theme of the missional conference will be "Who is my Neighbor?" Presenters will be Alan and Debra Hirsch.

The conference will focus on a variety of topics:

- Inviting all people in so they feel that they have a place just to be and feel loved
- Leading with embrace rather than theology
- Respecting high standards while extending grace
- Engaging third places*
- Christ and the Gospel as core for mission and church life

Cost for this event will be \$40 for Ohio Conference members attending ACA, \$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.

A brochure with more details about this missional conference is available on the Ohio Conference website: www.ohiomennoniteconference.org. To register online for this event, go to <http://bit.ly/MissionalConferenceRegistration>. Please register by March 3.

*Third places — According to Wikipedia, in community building, the **third place** (or **third space**) is the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home ("first **place**") and the workplace ("second **place**"). Examples of **third places** would be environments such as cafes, clubs or parks. To learn more about sociologist Ray Oldenburg's concept of "third places," see "What is a Third Place?" on the Forge America website: <http://bit.ly/ThirdPlaces>. ■

Ohio Conference welcomes

ALAN and DEBRA HIRSCH

for a missional conference

Who Is My Neighbor?

Kidron Mennonite Church
Kidron, Ohio

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 12—8:30 P.M.
FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 8:30 A.M.-8:30 P.M.

Cost:
\$40 for Ohio Conference members attending ACA
\$55 for Ohio Conference members
\$85 for non-Ohio Conference attendees
****ATTENDEES 30 and under: 1/2 price****
The registration cost includes the conference, dinner on Thursday, lunch on Friday, snacks and resources.

For more information or to register, visit www.ohiomennoniteconference.org.
Registration deadline March 3, 2017.





Who are Alan and Debra Hirsch?

Continued from page 1

through the Holy Spirit. It was in Australia that he met and married Debra and they began a life of ministry together. They have served together at South Melbourne Church of Christ, Churches of Christ Victoria and Tasmania Conference, and Forge Mission Training Network.

Since moving to the United States much of their work has focused on developing training systems for innovative missional leadership and movements. Developing missional DNA in

churches is of vital importance to Alan and Debra. Their writings describe missional DNA as encompassing six areas: Christology, discipleship, incarnational mission, apostolic environment, organic systems, and community.

When Alan and Debra come for the training event in Kidron they will help Ohio Conference churches understand how to be places of welcome and belonging, cross and remove barriers that separate people, inspire individuals to think and live missionally, respond well to the broader culture's approach to sexuality and other issues, and

ground mission and fellowship in Christ and the gospel. Please consider attending this training event. It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn from two innovative and effective mission strategists.

Sources:

<http://www.alanhirsch.org/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Hirsch
<http://www.theforgottenways.org/alan-hirsch.aspx> ■

How Alan and Debra Hirsch influenced me

**By Jason Rissler
Church Planter
Cross Connections
Having Alan and Debra Hirsch with us in Ohio Conference for two days is a true gift. My life and ministry have been tremendously enriched by their ministry.**

One of my first interactions with Alan Hirsch was in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as Alan spoke with Lancaster Conference leaders and Mennonite church planters. He put into words things that I felt stirring in me regarding the state of the church. One specific thing that he spoke about was the decline of the American church as well

as a new paradigm to think about the church. His challenge to us as church leaders is to make decisions today that will positively impact the history of the church.

I was privileged to hear Alan and Debra several times at an Exponential church planting conference. Together they talked about incarnational mission. Using Jesus as an example, they looked at how he lived as "one of us" from within the culture. They spoke, using stories and practical applications, about ways that we can follow Jesus' example in embracing the culture, living into it and sharing the gospel from within the culture. This teaching has turned my thinking on evangelism and mission upside down.

Along with some of you, I heard Alan speak at the Mennonite Convention in Kansas City. Alan talked about the importance of embracing the APEST (apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher) leadership model found in Ephesians 4:11. He challenged us that each one of these giftings is essential in the church. In our work in Strasburg we have paid special attention to having all five of these gifts in operation.

I look forward to continue learning from Alan and Debra as they come to Kidron in March for our missional conference. I hope that you take this wonderful opportunity and come with a group of leaders from your church. ■

"[Alan Hirsch] put into words things that I felt stirring in me regarding the state of the church."

Worship resourcing seminar coming this spring

Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron will host a worship resourcing seminar on Saturday, May 6. Primary speaker for the day will be Rachel Miller Jacobs, assistant professor of congregational formation at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

In addition to her work as a professor, Rachel Miller Jacobs is a spiritual director. She was the resources coordinator for *Leader*, a magazine of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. For six years she was pastor of Chris-

tian formation for a local congregation.

The worship resourcing seminar also will include workshops on a variety of topics, such as music leading, drama and scripture reading in worship, visuals, and liturgy and prayers.

The seminar is for people of all ages, but especially for young adults (high school and post-high ages). Sonnenberg Mennonite Church and Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville are sponsoring this event, and the Ohio Conference is providing additional financial support.



Rachel Miller Jacobs

Check future issues of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* for registration information. ■

Men's retreat to focus on sharing the story of Jesus

Church consultant J. David Eshleman will be the speaker at the annual Men's Retreat at Camp Luz in Kidron March 31-April 2.

During the weekend, David Eshleman will focus on material from his newest book, *Share the Irresistible Story of Jesus*. In the preface to the book, Eshleman states that his purpose is "to motivate Christians and church-

es to make the Great Commission the compelling passion of their lives and churches."

Registration cost for this retreat is \$95 for men attending the full retreat. Part-time options are available as well. Registration is due by March 27. For more information, see <http://www.camluz.com/Men's%20Retreat.htm>. ■



AMBS to offer !Explore program for youth

This summer Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Indiana, will be offering !Explore, a theological pro-

gram for high school youth in grades 11 and 12. This program includes both congregational experience and a group experi-

ence on the AMBS campus. To learn more, see <http://bit.ly/AMBSExplore>. ■

ABOUT PEOPLE

Naomi Engle

Naomi Ruth Epp Engle, who pastored West Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon along with her husband, Jess, passed away at home, surrounded by her family, on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017. She was 51.

Naomi served as chair of the Ohio Conference Credentialing Ministry and was a member of the Ohio Conference Leadership Team from 2011 until late last year. She had been diagnosed with brain cancer in September.

Naomi was born Dec. 8, 1965, in Freeman, South Dakota, to Willard and Elsie (Wiebe) Epp. Raised on a hog farm in Marion, South Dakota, Naomi spent

many summers working at Swan Lake Christian Camp. She graduated from high school from Freeman Academy in Freeman, South Dakota, where she met her husband, Jess. They were married while attending Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she received her bachelor's degree in art.

After she and her family moved to Harrisonburg, Virginia, Naomi earned a master of arts degree in pastoral counseling at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. She and Jess served as pastors of Aurora Mennonite Church, near Streetsboro, for seven years. Beginning in 2009, they

served as a pastoral team at West Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon.

She is survived by her husband of 31 years, Jess; daughters Anna, Grace (Ben) Delp, and Marie; granddaughter Naisa Delp; grandson Yonah Delp; sisters Roselyn Parks and Rachel Winters; and brothers Donald, Stan, and Bryan, and father Willard Epp. She was preceded in death by her mother, Elsie.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, Jan. 7, at West Clinton Mennonite. The family suggests memorial gifts be given to the Naomi Engle Women in Ministry Scholarship Fund. ■

Pastoral notes

Matt Weaver was licensed for ministry and installed as associate pastor at Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker on July 24. Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker led the licensing and installation ceremony.

Lee Martin, pastor of Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia, shared the sermon, "Building with Care on the One Foundation." Matt and his wife, Megan, attended Mt. Clinton while in seminary. Lee used I Corinthians 3:5-17 as a text, and gave Matt gifts that paralleled two images from that passage: growing plants (a set of gardening tools) and a builder (a large antique wooden plane) to remind Matt that God makes the plants grow, and



God shapes the church and those who serve it.

Lonnie Yoder, professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, brought greetings and affirmation from the seminary. He noted that Matt's skills in working with people had been on

display in Matt's last year of seminary when he served as president of the student body. Matt utilized his gifts in planning and leading worship as he led the Young Adult Praise Band. ■

Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker (right) led the licensing ceremony for Matt Weaver at Lockport Mennonite Church. Also pictured is Matt's wife, Megan (at left). Megan was identified incorrectly in a previous issue of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel*. We regret the error.

Conference Calendar

FEB

2 Year of Covenant Meeting for Pastors, Toledo Mennonite

MAR

10-11 LEAD3D (Youth Leadership) Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

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

JUL

4-8 Mennonite Church USA Convention, Orlando, Florida

AUG

18-19 LEAD3D (Youth Leadership) Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

Summer Youth Program work is focused on cleanup, disaster mitigation, and repairing homes. Participating groups need to have at least one adult for every three youth.

The 2017 Summer Youth Program locations are Detroit, Michigan; Pine Ridge, South Dakota; and Southern Ontario, Canada. To apply or to get more information, visit the MDS website: <https://mds.mennonite.net/volunteer/youth-programs/>.

The registration deadline for Hesston College's 2017 Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series is rapidly approaching. The Feb. 17-19 conference will cover the topic "When the Unthinkable Happens," and will discuss how congregations and communities can prepare for and respond to trauma.

Participants will learn key principles and practices for responding to trauma with resiliency, hope and healing.

For more information, see the Hesston College website: <http://bit.ly/2017AVDS>.

Back page briefings...

Regina Wenger, pastoral team member at Central Mennonite Church in Archbold, has written a tribute to Naomi Engle for *The Mennonite*. You can read it at <https://themennonite.org/feature/remembering/>.

The Summer Youth Program of Mennonite Disaster Service is now accepting applications. The Summer Youth Program is a weeklong summer service experience designed for youth and their sponsors to put hands and feet to the gospel by serving others.

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For more Ohio Conference news, visit the Ohio Conference website: ohiomennoniteconference.org