

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

MAR/APR 2016



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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Central Mennonite hosts Annual Conference Assembly

Delegates deal with membership

Questions of membership took center stage at the 2016 Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) of Ohio Conference. Two hundred seventy-six people attended ACA, including 210 delegates from 54 congregations. The annual gathering took place March 11-12 at Central Mennonite Church in Archbold.

Delegates voted on two resolutions regarding membership, one dealing with the Conference's membership in



Erin Dye speaks during open mic time while other delegates wait their turn to address the delegate body.

Mennonite Church USA, and the other offering two separate types of membership in Ohio Conference.

Based on the delegates' voting, Ohio Conference will remain part of Mennonite

Church USA, but individual congregations will be able to remain as members of Ohio Conference even if they choose to withdraw from the denomination.

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The power of congregational support in a long, difficult journey

By Howard Nikkel
My particular journey began seven and a half years ago when I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. The journey has included many visits to the cardiologists, medications to help the heart function better, a procedure called

ultrafiltration done in a Venezuelan hospital, an implant that contained a pacemaker, defibrillator and a resynchronizer, and ending up with an LVAD (left ventricular assist device, or heart pump) installed in my heart. I am currently on the list for a

heart transplant.*

The first six years were difficult in many ways. I was limited in the amount of activity I could handle, plus the heart failure was slowly increasing. We had several friends in Venezuela, which helped, but we didn't have those who

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EDITORIAL

Do I try to shush the Holy Spirit?



Sometimes it takes humor to get my attention. This year during worship at Annual Conference Assembly, I found myself laughing along with the rest of the congregation as actors Eliot and Seth Nofziger portrayed a man (Eliot) who,

while wanting to participate in God's work, also spends much of his time trying to reign in the actions of the Holy Spirit (Seth), in case they might come across to others as too strange.

After the laughter, I had to reflect: How much does

this resemble my own experience? Am I allowing the Holy Spirit free reign in my life, or am I more likely to spend my time trying to get the Holy Spirit to be quiet and let me do things my way?

— ahl

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Editor: Ann H. Leaman

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Missional training focuses on being sent

Immediately prior to Annual Conference Assembly, 89 individuals participated in a training workshop March 10-11 led by Brad Brisco and Lance Ford of Forge Ministries. Those taking part in "Becoming Missional: Re-Learning How to Be Sent" had the opportunity to grow in their knowledge and passion for God's mission right in their own neighborhoods.

A DVD set of this training session (with a total of four DVDs) is being produced for Ohio Conference. If you would like to order the DVD set, please contact Judy King at the Ohio Conference office at ohmc@zoominternet.net or 330-857-5421. ■



Presenter Brad Brisco talks to participants in the "Becoming Missional" training session March 10-11 at Central Mennonite Church. Photo by Kevin Kanagy.

Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

- Moderator: Bob Sauder — bpsauder@williams-net.com
- Assistant Moderator: Thomas Dunn — thomas@crownhillmennonite.com
- Transitional Conference Leader: George O'Reilly — pastorgeorgeoreilly@gmail.com
- Credentialing Ministry Chair: Naomi Engle — englenaomi@gmail.com
- Gifts Discernment Ministry Chair: Mel Hathaway — smcpastor@embarqmail.com
- Stewardship Ministry Chair: Melanie Miller — mgfmiller@gmail.com
- Regional Pastor: Ralph Reinford — ralphreinford@gmail.com
- Administrative Secretary: Judy King — ohmc@zoominternet.net
- Finance Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — cbohl@zoominternet.net
- Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@earthlink.net
- Coordinator of Volunteers: Alys Short — alysashort@gmail.com



MC USA MEMBERSHIP

Delegates did not approve a resolution to consider withdrawal from Mennonite Church USA. The resolution was stated as follows: Ohio Conference should undertake a process to consider withdrawal from Mennonite Church USA. Seventy percent of delegates (139) voted against the resolution, and 30 percent (58) voted for it.

Prior to the vote on the resolution about withdrawing from Mennonite Church USA, the Leadership Team had presented a statement on remaining with Mennonite Church USA, and delegates had discussed the statement. (The statement is on the Ohio Conference website on the "Assembly Documents" page.) The statement includes several conditions which would cause the Leadership Team to reevaluate whether to continue the Conference's membership in the denomination.

The resolution to consider withdrawing from Mennonite Church USA was submitted to the Resolutions Committee from the delegate body. Initially the Resolutions Committee proposed taking a straw poll about withdrawal from the de-

nomination, with suggested action steps for the Ohio Conference Leadership Team to follow based on results of the straw poll. However, after consultation with the parliamentarian for ACA, Matt Hochstetler of Oak Grove Mennonite Church (Smithville), it was determined that a straw poll was not an appropriate way to deal with the issue, and the Leadership Team brought the question to delegates in the form of a resolution.

TWO TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

Delegates did approve another membership resolution proposed by the Leadership Team. The resolution calls for developing two types of membership in Ohio Conference. Individual congregations can be members of Ohio Conference and Mennonite Church USA, or they can be members of Ohio Conference only. Eighty percent of

ACA images (from upper left, clockwise): Conference Administrative Assistant Judy King takes time out for laughter; the Central Mennonite music team practices before the Friday worship service; Seth and Eliot Nofziger present a drama about building on a good foundation; and delegates have the chance to visit agency displays during break times. Photos by Bryan Leaman. For more ACA photos, see www.ohiomennoniteconference.org or the Ohio Conference Facebook page.

delegates (152) voted for the resolution.

SPENDING PLAN IS PARED DOWN

Ninety-seven percent of delegates also approved the Conference spending plan for 2016-17. Total spending is projected to be \$325,723, a significant reduction from the amount budgeted for 2015-16, which was \$526,170. The plan calls for a reduction in staffing. Previously, the Conference had up to 5.5 full time equivalent staff members. In 2016-17, the staff will be 3.25 full time equivalents plus a flat consulting fee for the financial coordinator.

Another change for 2015-16 is the level of giving to Mennonite Church USA. In the past year 10 percent has been sent to Mennonite Church USA. In the

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West Clinton congregation sees value in being blessed by a dress

Girls look through the dresses available at the “Beauty Comes from the Heart” event. Dresses are “sold” on a donation-only basis, and the donations go to charities.



By Pam Graber

Outreach ideas come in many ways, but by far the most successful come when God does the nudging. West Clinton’s “Prom Trend: Beauty Comes from the Heart” event is the result of one such nudge.

“If someone had told me five years ago that I would be coordinating a prom dress event, I would have told them they were crazy,” said Lori King. “But in 2013, God had another plan. One night He whispered to me to do an event on beauty for young ladies. My reaction was, ‘What? Me, God?! I have three sons and never had to buy things for a daughter! What do I know about these things?’”

Believing that she needed to listen when God whispers ideas to her, Lori stepped out in faith and put together the first prom dress event in less than a month. The first year she started with fewer than 80 dresses, and only 15 girls showed up for the one-night event, taking 12

dresses. “I said if only one girl showed up and took a dress that it would be worth it,” Lori said. The second year jewelry, shoes, wraps and purses were added to the event, and the young ladies came from further away. A total of 32 young ladies attended with 22 dresses taken, more than doubling the attendance from the first year and nearly doubling the number of dresses. In 2015, the third year of the event, word really began to spread through newspaper and radio interviews and the addition of social media. Schools in the four-county area put it on their morning announcements. A total of 80 young ladies viewed dresses, taking a total of 93 dresses in 2015. So far in 2016, 104 young ladies have looked at the dresses, and Lori will be opening up again in early April.

In addition to opening up her “dress boutique” for prom, Lori has also opened up to girls who are looking for homecoming dance dresses. She collects dresses throughout the year, going to Goodwill, garage sales

and sometimes peoples’ homes. This year she started with more than 500 dresses to choose from in all sizes. “Every girl deserves to look beautiful for her prom!” Lori often says.

Dresses are “sold” on a donation-only basis. “Last year a young woman called me because of seeing a newspaper article in her hometown paper and asked about the event. She and two other friends were brought to the event by her grandmother. All three young ladies found beautiful dresses, and the grandmother came to me with tears in her eyes saying that she was so thankful for this event so that these young ladies who do not have the money to go buy new dresses can go to the prom in style,” Lori said. “I got a call from the young lady the next morning saying, ‘We are coming back because my mom wants to give some money for the dress I picked out yesterday.’ I told her that she did not need to drive back over 30 miles to do this – that all the items are free if you cannot donate. The grandmother, mother and daughter all came back to give a donation, and the girl found a short dress for graduation also that day!”

Any donations given have gone to charities. The first three years The Dow Family Children’s Home in Kenya benefited from the dress donations. Lori picked them because her son, Nic King, worked there

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Dresses Continued from page 4

during part of his YES experience with Eastern Mennonite Missions. This year the money was split between Children's Lantern (helping survivors of human trafficking in NWO) in Defiance, Ohio, and the inter-

national mission Growing Hope in Haiti.

"I feel that those who have worked and experienced the events have seen how God can work through being blessed by

a dress," Lori stated. "It's the smiles of the young ladies, parents, grandparents, boyfriends and friends. It's taking time to listen to all those who come because they all have a story." ■

ACA Continued from page 3

coming year, Mennonite Church USA is to receive 5 percent of funds given from congregations which are part of Mennonite Church USA. Those congregations which choose not to be part of Mennonite Church USA will not have any of their funds sent to the denomination.

YEAR OF COVENANT

Delegates also discussed the Leadership Team's proposal to enter into a One-Year Covenant for Ohio Conference Congregations, Pastors, Conference Leaders and Staff. Many delegates commented favorably about the covenant during open mic time, and congregations are being invited to sign the covenant. A copy of the covenant is on the Ohio Conference website.

RELEASE OF CONGREGATIONS

Transitional Conference Leader George O'Reilly and Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford led the delegates in a litany of lament and blessing for congregations which have chosen to leave the Ohio Conference. Those congregations are Longenecker Mennonite Church, Grace Community Church, Martins

Creek Mennonite Church, Owl Creek Mennonite Church, Day-spring Christian Fellowship, Aurora Mennonite Church, and Moorhead Mennonite Church. In addition, Cornerstone Mennonite Fellowship closed at the end of 2015.

The Annual Conference Assembly also included two worship services focused on the theme "Holy Ground: Founded on Faith, Flourishing in Christ." The worship services included sermons by Transitional Conference Leader George O'Reilly and Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford, as well as dramas by Eliot and Seth Nofziger and music led by music teams from Central Mennonite and Tedrow Mennonite.

In other business, the delegates:

— Approved the minutes of the 2015 ACA;

— Were introduced to pastors with new assignments in the Ohio Conference;

— Affirmed the personnel slate presented by the Gifts Discernment Ministry (see pages 8-10 for more information) and had a prayer of blessing for incoming Moderator Bob Sauder;

— Heard Randy Carr of Beaverdam Mennonite Church and Alex Dye and Dick Barrett of Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty report about two ministries which received grants from the Ministry Development Team during 2015-16;

— Heard about the Ohio Conference Year of Mission, which is taking place in 2016-17, from Ministry Development Team members Jacob Dodson, Kevin Kanagy and Jason Rissler;

— Heard from Terry Shue of Mennonite Church USA and Jim Frado of Everence about a grant from the Lily Endowment which will fund financial education events for pastors as well as providing grants for pastors in financial need;

— Heard a report about the work of the Ministry Development Team from Assistant Moderator Thomas Dunn;

— Heard a report from Credentialing Ministry Chair Naomi Engle;

— Heard a report from Ohio Conference Resource Advocate Lois Bontrager about resources available from Mennonite Church USA agencies;

— Celebrated communion. ■

TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

Working together as a body

By George O'Reilly
Transitional Conference Leader

As I write this, many of us have just returned from several days of working together as Ohio Conference on our mission and trajectory for the next year certainly, and on into the foreseeable future.

We began with a special Missional presentation from Forge Network titled "Becoming Missional: Re-Learning How to Be Sent." This series of addresses was designed to re-focus our attention on community-based outreach as God's people. Attendees seemed much energized by these presentations.

We then turned our attention to discussing and discerning how our combined life as Ohio Conference will take shape in the next stage of our work together.

I must admit this was fairly tiring work for me, as I know it was for numerous others. We might prefer that such decisions would simply "fall quickly into place" with some ease, since we are, after all, God's people united by the Spirit.

Ephesians 4 speaks strongly on the unity we have by the act of God through the Spirit. But this passage also speaks about the working together of every different element of the body. "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way

into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." — Ephesians 4:15-16

Such work in a physical human body is very demanding and tiring. Muscles tire, joints ache, and ligaments feel overly stretched. Engaging in such physical training builds the coordinated strength of the entire person, preparing that person to face new physical challenges.

In Christ's body, this work too is designed to prepare the body unified by the Spirit for new perplexities and challenges. The scripture passage says that once we grow into more maturity we will "no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching" — Ephesians 4:14

This exercise toward stability in faith and wisdom in discernment is gained as the body brings all its resources together, engaging the gifts and strengths of each member, balancing the energy and efforts of each muscle and joint, heeding the function of every part. By so doing, just as a physical body can achieve balance and coordination, the spiritual body of Christ, the Church, can find balance in the oft-times disorienting pressures of our daily life together.



I experienced this truth at the Ohio Conference Annual Conference Assembly this year. We spoke openly, we listened respectfully, we discussed, sometimes enthusiastically, but in the end we came to a fairly high level of agreement about where we will go next. Was it perfect? No, nor shall it ever be in this age. The constant need for further strengthening remains. But we moved away from tossing about to setting our direction in hopes of maturing and growing in Christ together.

I am ready for a day or two off, actually. But the expenditure of energy was fulfilling and worthwhile. I am very thankful that this effort was not that of just a few, but of the many persons from across Ohio Conference who came together committed to engaging in this work of the Body together.

So I hope that even if you too are tired, you feel the satisfaction of having tested our combined strength and having found

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"We spoke openly, we listened respectfully, we discussed, sometimes enthusiastically, but in the end we came to a fairly high level of agreement about where we will go next. Was it perfect? No, nor shall it ever be in this age."

Congregational support

Continued from page 1

would seriously walk by our side during this time. By the time we arrived in the United States, I was hospitalized almost immediately. I had very swollen legs, very little stamina (even going up a flight of 12 stairs was difficult), and not much of an appetite. In short, you could say I was in a bad way.

It was at this point that we began to receive the spiritual and emotional support that we didn't have in Venezuela. We made the choice to attend Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville and are currently seeking membership. At Oak Grove, the first Sunday we were made to feel welcome. One couple in particular made it a point to greet us, introduce themselves, and make sure we knew where they lived and that they were neighbors.

While I was in the hospital (over 10 weeks between June 22 and Oct. 16, 2014), I received several visits from Oak Grove people, making the trip to Columbus to see me. I was on the Oak Grove prayer list, and I was assured over and over that people were praying for me, both while in the hospital and continuing to this day. We received gifts of food after our return in October, as well as offers to help us with anything we needed to have done around the house or yard. This support in prayer, fellowship and assistance is still ongoing.

In addition to the congregation's support, we have received a lot of support from an accountability group that we asked to walk with us more directly. I gave them five areas where I would need encouragement and growth in my life preparing to receive someone else's heart. I gave them permission to "meddle in my life." This group has been a blessing that is hard to describe in terms of holding me accountable, giving me direction, and stretching me to grow outside of myself. They have given me assignments for the next meeting. For example, I have in the past composed some songs, so one assignment was, "Write a song." Trusting in God's inspiration, I did. They suggested I write my journey in a book form, which I am in the process of doing. One observation they made was that I should get out of the house and do things with people, so I volunteered to work with MCC Connections in Kidron, and my wife and I are available as substitute teachers at Wooster Christian School. Writing this article to share how Oak Grove has helped us in a major journey was my latest assignment.

Not everyone has a journey like mine, but in every congregation there are many who need people to walk with them in their needs. What can a congregation do? First, pray diligently for

them. Ask the Lord to show specific ways to pray that go beyond human understanding to know.

Second, when they are in church, show yourself friendly in greeting them, taking time to ask how it is going, and in general let them know that you care for them. Depending on the need, extend offers of work around the house or transportation to appointments to show you care.

Third, consider forming a group to walk with them just as our group has walked with us. Such a labor requires a commitment to be there when needed, to prayerfully consider what they need and how you can "give assignments," so to speak, that will help them move forward toward the goal of a close relationship with Jesus that will carry them through many a tough moment.

**On Feb. 20, Howard received a new heart and is recovering well. The journey is by no means over, but a great milestone has been reached, and the congregation, along with his support group, rejoices with this new lease on life for Howard.*

Howard served for many years as a missionary in Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. He and his wife, Ellen, returned to the United States about two years ago. ■

"We have received a lot of support from an accountability group that we asked to walk with us more directly. I gave them five areas where I would need encouragement and growth in my life preparing to receive someone else's heart."

Transitional thoughts

Continued from page 6

it sufficient for the task of those several days.

May we always treasure the work of the body, growing itself

up in love as each part does its work! ■

Volunteers accept Conference positions

Members of Ohio Conference congregations who volunteer their time play a vital role in Conference life. Without the help of numerous volunteers, many of the programs and functions of the Ohio Conference could not take place.

Much of the work of Ohio Conference is done by the Leadership Team, the Ministry Development Team, the Credentialing Ministry, the Stewardship Ministry and the Gifts Discernment Ministry. Delegates at Annual Conference Assembly affirmed the following individuals for service:

Moderator

Name: Robert Sauder (Bob)

Home Congregation: Salem (Waldron, Mich.)

Occupation: Retired high school teacher (30 years, Spanish, Math, guidance counselor, basketball/track coach, athletic director), currently self-employed carpenter/owner Retired Handyman Construction

Previous Service: Church council, Sunday school teacher, church chair, elder, conference delegate

Family Information: Two adult daughters, Mary Sauder and Kelly Sauder-Neff, six wonderful grandsons and one unspoiled granddaughter

Goals: The Ohio Conference can continue to be an institution in which we can all grow as Christians, a place where we can worship and praise and



learn together as we share God's love to those around us.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Reading, woodworking, spending time with the grandkids, construction supervisor for Fulton County Habitat for Humanity, volunteering at Sauder Village

Gifts Discernment Ministry — Chair

Name: Mel Hathaway

Home Congregation: Sonnenberg Mennonite

Occupation: Pastor

Previous

Service: Gifts Discernment Ministry chair and member, Resolutions Committee

Family Information: Wife - Dottie Hathaway

Goals: Working with the Gifts Discernment Ministry Team and Conference Leadership Team to call forth the many gifts and abilities God has blessed us with, to strengthen the Conference and to build God's Kingdom.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Reading, yard work and home improvement projects



Stewardship Ministry — Chair

Name: Melanie G. Miller

Home Congregation: Maple Grove (Hartville)

Occupation: CTP, treasury analyst/accountant

Previous Service: Ohio Conference Stewardship Ministry,



Indiana/Michigan Mennonite Women Treasurer

Family Information: I have been married to Rod Miller, pastor at Maple Grove, for nearly nine years, and we have two children, Cadence (6) and Keilana (3), as well as two cats, and a goldfish.

Goals: The desire of my heart has been to use my talents and interests in serving God. My goal for this term of service is to use my gifts and talents to assist in the oversight of Ohio Conference's finances, so that Ohio Conference can do the work that God is calling us to do.

Hobbies/Special Interests: One of my hobbies is geocaching with my husband and kids. I also love spending time with friends by being real and sharing life and laughter together.

Ministry Development Team — Faith Focus

Name: Kenneth S. Sims (Ken)

Home Congregation: Sharon Mennonite Church (2007-present) and Lee Heights Community Church (1961-2007)

Occupation: Financial services representative at Everence Financial Services, Plain City, Ohio

Previous Service: Served several times as elder at Lee Heights and currently completing final year of service as lead elder at Sharon Mennonite Church

Family Information: Married to Grace (Hostetler) Sims for 46 years; three adult children; seven grandchildren



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Volunteers

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Goals: To serve the greater church in areas of faith building and to learn from the faith experiences of others.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Detailing custom, classic and exotic cars; auto endurance racing fan; historical reading

Stewardship Ministry — Endowment Focus

Name: Matthew R.

Hochstetler

Home Congregation:

Oak Grove (Smithville)

Occupation: Attorney at Day Ketterer Ltd.



Previous Service: Member of Ohio Conference Stewardship Ministry for preceding two years; former church board member

Family Information: Wife, Megan; daughter, Greta

Goals: Effective, faithful management of Ohio Conference's finances

Hobbies/Special Interests: Playing with my daughter, cycling, reading, talking with interesting people

Credentialing Ministry

Name: Miriam Zehr

Home Congregation:

Oak Grove (Smithville)

Occupation: Associate Pastor of

Oak Grove Mennonite Church

Previous Service: Have been pastoring part time for more than 20 years. Served on Nurture Commission of the Indiana-Michigan (IN-MI) Confer-



ence and on a Youth Task Force. Also served on the IN-MI Mennonite Women Planning Committee

Family Information: Husband, Doug, who is lead pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite; three adult daughters; two sons-in-law; and two grandchildren

Goals: I have been licensed and ordained since coming to Ohio Conference seven years ago. The process is still quite fresh in my mind. I am looking forward to contributing to what I have personally benefitted from and encouraging healthy pastoral leadership within the Conference.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Reading, walking, baking with yeast, travel, spending time with grandchildren

Credentialing Ministry

Name: Vickie Dee Yoder (Vick)

Home Congregation: Sharon

Occupation: Ordained minister, board certified chaplain, therapy dog handler. I presently serve as a staff chaplain at Ohio Health in Columbus, Ohio. I often enjoy visiting with Shadow, a certified therapy dog. We visit schools, senior living centers, nursing homes and hospitals.

Previous Service: Member of Ohio Conference Gifts Discernment Committee, vice-chairperson for Ohio Mennonite Women (OMW), president of the Chaplains Association of Ohio, worked with Mennonite Health Services Planning Committee and gave several work-



shops nationwide. Vickie also was a guest speaker for OMW, speaking on the importance of "Being Real," and served as worship leader for a Women's Retreat at Camp Luz.

Family Information: Husband Bob, a retired pastor; two adult daughters, Mary (Jason) Sims and Bobbi (Jason) Watkins; seven grandchildren

Goals: My goal for this term of service would be to serve with integrity, accountability and joy.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Pastoral counseling, therapy dog handler, and certified bereavement coach. I also enjoy flowers, crafts, playing the Native American flute, drumming, and silence.

Credentialing Ministry

Name: LaVonne Hartman

Home Congregation: Pike

Occupation: Business – Auntie Anne's/Cinnabon

Previous

Service: Conference Council, Executive Committee Secretary, Assistant Moderator, Leadership Team, member of Credentialing Ministry, Ohio Conference representative to Bluffton University Board of Trustees

Family Information: Husband – Bill

Goals: Serving God, Conference and the church

Hobbies/Special Interests: Traveling, sightseeing, hiking, bird-watching, visiting with friends



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Volunteers

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Gifts Discernment Ministry

Name: Linda Short

Home Congregation: Zion

Occupation:

Interim pastor at Lima Mennonite Church, Lima, Ohio, since September 2015

Previous Service: Interim Pastor at Toledo Mennonite Church, Toledo, Ohio, January – April 2015

Family Information: Husband, LaVon Short; three grown sons; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild



Goals: To support Ohio Conference as we discern how best to serve the churches within Ohio Conference and by seeking to discern and empower spiritual gifts at the conference level.

Hobbies/Special Interests: Reading, travel, spending time with family

Gifts Discernment Ministry

Name: Alan Kauffman

Home Congregation: Oak Grove (West Liberty)

Occupation: Farm consultant

Previous Service: Member of



Gifts Discernment Ministry, member of Ministry Development Team

Gifts Discernment Ministry

Name: Nathan Beachy

Home Congregation: Lee Heights

Occupation: Physician

Gifts Discernment Ministry

Name: Rick Stoner

Home Congregation: Sharon

Occupation: Pastor

Gifts Discernment Ministry

Name: Stefanie Hathaway

Home Congregation: Toledo

Occupation: Psychologist



ABOUT PEOPLE

Bluffton University

Emily Short '19, a biblical and theological studies major from Archbold, Ohio, talks at Bluffton University about her fall 2015 cross-cultural experience in Guatemala.



BLUFFTON, Ohio — Bluffton University's cross-cultural experience allows students to experience a new place, to learn a new culture and the freedom to explore independently. But Karl Karcher, an information technology major from Ada, Ohio, summed up the true value of a cross-cultural experience in one sentence. "The

experience taught me what it's like to be an outsider."

Karcher was one of 12 Bluffton University students who spent the fall 2015 semester on cross-cultural trips, either abroad or in Washington, D.C. During February, they talked about their experiences in a presentation for the campus community.

Seven of those students spent last semester in Guatemala, including Emily Short, a biblical and theological studies major from Archbold, Ohio. She is a member of West Clinton Mennonite Church.

The group spent the first 10 weeks in the capital, Guatemala City, taking Spanish and Latin American history classes at the

Central America Study and Service program which is affiliated with the Guatemalan Mennonite Church.

During their stay, the participants lived with host families. They took Spanish class for four hours each morning. In the afternoon they took classes such as Violence, Justice and Peace and Global Studies.

The Central American country has a population of more than 15 million people and is still recovering from 36 years of civil war known as La Violencia (The Violence). Peace Accords were signed in 1996; however, the country remains unstable in many ways. While the students

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ABOUT PEOPLE Continued from page 10

were there, peaceful protests forced the president to step down and elections for his successor took place.

Short said she woke up to her host mom listening to the radio. "And she said, 'the president left last night.'" Since that's unimaginable in the United

States, Short instantly wondered if she could still go to class. Her host mom simply stated, "Oh yeah, it's fine."

For the final month, the students ventured into separate community learning field assignments. The students were matched with organizations that

reflected their majors and interests.

Bluffton students may meet a cross-cultural requirement either through a semester program or a short-term experience in the spring, or by taking at least six credit hours of a foreign language. ■

Pastoral notes

Regina Wenger was licensed for ministry and installed as a member of the pastoral team at Central Mennonite Church in Archbold on Jan. 3.

Pastor Sue Conrad Howes, Regina's mentor, preached the sermon, which was titled "God Has Done Great Things!" Charlotte Wenger, Regina's sister, read the scriptures, which included 1 John 1:1-7 and Psalm 126. Transitional Conference Leader George O'Reilly led the licensing and installation ceremony.



A native of Waynesboro, Pa., Regina is a graduate of Hesston

College, Eastern Mennonite University and Duke Divinity School. ■

Regina Wenger was licensed for ministry and installed as a pastoral team member at Central Mennonite Jan. 3. Pictured are (left to right) Nancy Roynon, chair of Central Mennonite's board; Transitional Conference Leader George O'Reilly; Regina Wenger; and Sue Conrad Howes.

Hispanic retreats bear fruit

By Raul Tadeo

Hispanic family retreats are held at Camp Luz each year. These retreats have been held for 12 years by several Spanish-speaking Mennonite churches and outreaches in Ohio. This past year again as the Word was preached and an invitation was given, God's spirit moved men, women and youth who made first-time commitments or renewals of their commitment to be faithful disciples of Jesus.



On Aug. 9, 2015, Iglesia Cristiana Hispana of Hilliard, Ohio, a participating church in our Hispanic Retreats, baptized nine

persons, including two couples. Many of these commitments are the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Hispanic Retreat held at Camp Luz. ■

David Villalta, pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Hispana of Hilliard, Ohio, pictured at right, stands in the water with a group of individuals from the congregation who were baptized. The Iglesia Cristiana Hispana congregation is one of the groups which participates in the Hispanic family retreats at Camp Luz.

Conference Calendar

APRIL

- 7 Faith and Values in the Marketplace Workshop, Kidron Park Community Building
- 8-10 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 9 Spring Day of Inspiration, Ohio Mennonite Women, Crown Hill Mennonite, Rittman
- 16 MCC Peace Gathering, Kidron Mennonite Church
- 29-30 Father-Son Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

MAY

- 2 Couples in Ministry Retreat Day, Camp Luz, Kidron

JUNE

- 4 Family Fun Day, Camp Luz, Kidron

AUG

- 12-14 Girls' Jamboree, Camp Luz, Kidron

SEPT

- 16-18 Women's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

NOV

- 11-13 Retreat for Pastors' Wives, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin

Choice Books is seeking a chief executive officer.

Choice Books, LLC is a faith-based organization that distributes more than 5 million inspirational books annually to retailers in the secular marketplace. The current CEO is retiring in 2016 after 22 years of service. The successful candidate will have a passion for Christian ministry, strong servant-leadership skills, and solid business/management experience. Skills/Qualifications: Business degree or equivalent; willingness to lead in a complex, competitive, and rapidly changing environment; understanding of accounting systems, computer systems, and financial management systems; and ability to work with a board of directors and to engage a broad and diverse group of distributor organizations. Experience in retail/wholesale operations is preferred. Strong communication skills are required. The successful candidate will be innovative and visionary, bringing new ideas and strategies. The position is located in the Harrisonburg, Va., office and will begin May-June 2016. Please send resume with cover letter to duanemdoc@icloud.com. ■

Back page briefings...

Lois Bontrager is the new Ohio Conference Resource Advocate. The role of the Resource Advocate is to be aware of the latest resources from the various Mennonite Church USA groups and to find creative ways to make these resources useful to congregations. Resource Advocates from confer-

ences across Mennonite Church USA held their annual gathering Feb. 5-7 and met with representatives from Mennonite Church USA agencies.

If you have questions about what resources are available from Mennonite Church USA agencies, please contact Lois at loisbon1950@gmail.com.

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