

# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

MAY/JUNE 2016



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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## New year brings staff changes for Conference

**Ohio Conference has undergone two staffing changes for the 2016-17 Conference year.**

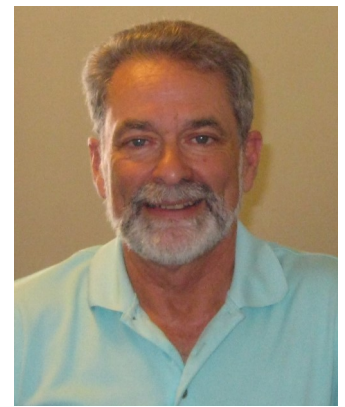
One change is the addition of a new part-time staff member. Cliff Brubaker has accepted a call from the Ohio Conference Leadership Team to serve as a regional pastor for the western part of the conference. This half-time assignment, which began April 1, is for a one-year interim period. He joins Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford, who is continuing to serve as regional pastor for the eastern part of the conference.

A resident of Hillsdale, Mich.,



Cliff Brubaker

Brubaker has a long history of ministry in the Ohio Conference. He was pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Mich., and then served as transitional pastor for four Ohio Conference congrega-



George O'Reilly

tions in northwest Ohio: Central Mennonite Church, Pine Grove Mennonite Church, Lockport Mennonite Church and Zion Mennonite Church. In addition, he was

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## Grant program to benefit local ministries

**For the fifth year in a row, the Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team (MDT) is accepting proposals from Conference congregations and related organizations for projects and mission initiatives. This**

**year, the MDT has \$21,614 available for grants.**

In light of the current Year of Mission focus within Ohio Conference, the MDT will give preference to proposals that are particularly mission oriented. Priority will also be



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VOL. LXX, NO. 3

MAY/JUNE 2016

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*Ohio Mennonite Evangel* (USPS 404-500) is published six times per year by the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA, Box 210, Kidron OH 44636, telephone (330) 857-5421.

All material for publication should be submitted to the editor at 5854 Sunland St. NE, Louisville OH 44641, or via telephone: (330) 453-0150, or e-mail: ohioevangel@gmail.com, one month prior to desired publication date.

*Ohio Mennonite Evangel* is distributed to all households of Ohio Conference congregations, other interested individuals and church agencies.

*Ohio Mennonite Evangel* is printed at Carlisle Printing, 2673 TR 421 Sugarcreek OH 44681.

Send subscription information and address changes to the editor at 5854 Sunland St. NE, Louisville OH 44641. Periodical postage paid at Millersburg OH 44654.

EDITORIAL

## Taking the Word to the world

I read a lot, and some things I read don't stick with me for long, but lately I have been contemplating a quote from *Jayber Crow*, a book by Wendell Berry which my book group discussed recently.

In Berry's book, the main character spends a fair amount of time pondering spiritual matters, and at one point, he says, "... as I have read the Gospels over the years, the belief has

grown in me that Christ did not come to found an organized religion but came instead to found an unorganized one. He seems to have come to carry religion out of the temples into the fields and sheep pastures, onto the roadsides and the banks of rivers, into the houses of sinners and publicans, into the town and the wilderness, toward the membership of all that is here."

Are we following Christ's example? Are we carrying God's message to our own neighborhoods and the larger world, or are we content to stay focused on our own churches? This year as we participate in the Ohio Conference Year of Mission, I encourage us to spend more time looking outward, rather than simply paying attention to those already in on our own "temples."

— ahl

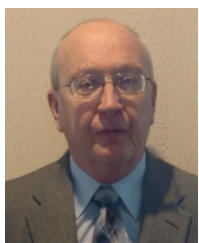
## Bob Sauder begins term as moderator

In the March-April issue of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel*, some information was omitted in the profile of Bob Sauder, the new moderator of the Ohio Conference. An updated version appears here:

### 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 Handyman Construction

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

**Family Information:** Wife, Pam; 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 ■

### 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: 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  
Regional Pastor: Cliff Brubaker — cliffbru7@gmail.com  
Year of Covenant Facilitator: George O'Reilly — pastorgeorgeoreilly@gmail.com  
Administrative Secretary: Judy King — ohmc@zoominternet.net  
Finance Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — cboh1@zoominternet.net  
Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@gmail.com  
Coordinator of Volunteers: Alysa Short — alysashort@gmail.com

## Grant program Continued from page 1

given to projects that are new initiatives or projects that could not be carried out without the grant funding. Proposals could be for projects that are local, regional, or global in scope; be creative!

The following criteria will be used in reviewing the applications:

Does this proposal fit with the Conference priorities of worship, faith and witness?

- Our passionate **worship** flows from our confession of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.
- We have a vibrant **faith** in God as Lord of all, who is at work reconciling the world.
- Through our bold **witness** others will accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and will build peace with all humankind.

Does this project respond to the priorities identified by the



delegates at the 2012 Annual Conference Assembly and/or the Year of Mission?

- start-up ministries/new initiatives
- community outreach
- revitalization of a congregation
- church planting
- implementing the Purposeful Plan
- focus on children or youth ministry
- resources for marriages and/or parenting

Is this proposal a collaborative effort among Ohio Conference congregations and/or related organizations?

Please note that this is a one-time grant. Grant monies are not intended to be used for staffing.

Grant proposals are due by **July 18, 2016**. More information and an online application are on the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/OCMinistryGrants>. The Ministry Development Team will consider all grant proposals at its Aug. 1 meeting. ■

*“In light of the current Year of Mission focus within Ohio Conference, the MDT will give preference to proposals that are particularly mission oriented.”*

## Staffing Continued from page 1

transitional pastor at Roanoake Mennonite Church in Eureka, Ill. For the past five years he served as the director of Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Mich.

In another change for Conference staffing, George O’Reilly has taken on a new role with the Conference. O’Reilly, who served as Transitional Conference Leader from September

2015 through March 2016, has begun a new half-time assignment as Year of Covenant Facilitator for the 2016-17 Conference year. In this role he is facilitating four all-Conference pastors’ meetings, the first of which was held May 11 at Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City. He also is working to encourage commitment and pray-

er throughout the Conference, among other duties. (For more information about the Year of Covenant, please see <http://bit.ly/ACADocuments>.)

Funding for this half-time staff position is coming from the Conference’s Capacity Building Fund rather than the 2016-17 Conference spending plan. ■

COVENANTING TOGETHER

# Spiritual competence

**By George O'Reilly  
Year of Covenant Facilitator**  
**The Church of today is in a crisis of credibility. Not just with those who never entertained the possibility of Christian faith, but especially with many who tried the Church and found it "wanting." If the Church just had problems with intellectuals and materialists, the Church would have much higher standing with our society in general. But many frankly have left the "fold of the Church" for the "field of spirituality," some having been raised in the Christian community. In some way they are suggesting that the church they have experienced lacks credibility.**

And credibility does matter — or at least it did with the Apostle Paul. In arguing for influence among those in Corinth, where he had started a fledgling community of believers, Paul describes the peculiar kind of credibility he believes should inspire confidence — his own confidence with regard to his own ministry, and confidence within the hearts of those who had experienced that ministry first hand.

"Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim any-

thing as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." — 2 Corinthians 3: 4-6

Paul steers away from declarations of personal or even communal competence — Paul certainly had partners with him on most of his ministry endeavors — and points to the "inspired" competence given by the Spirit to bring the Gospel into the ministry of those willing to allow that Spirit freedom to flow in their endeavors.

Even the positive effects of the Gospel Paul declared to this people were related less to Paul's personal competence than to the flowing of the Spirit, energizing and transforming, bringing the work of God personally and corporately to this new fellowship among God's people.

"Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? ... You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." — 2 Corinthians 3: 1-3

And while Paul would quite readily confess that he had been and was being changed by the



power of the Gospel in his own life, Paul does not suggest that any competence he has received is related to his mastery of the Law. In fact, it is quite the opposite. As seen in 2 Corinthians 3, he contrasts "tablets of stone" (the 10 Commandments) with the quite miraculous work of the Spirit in the very hearts of persons. The Spirit does the things the Law cannot approach.

Paul guides his audience to look elsewhere rather than at him or anything from him. And in fact, he is quite ready to admit he receives a competence that is beyond his own completeness.

"For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from

Continued on page 5

*"Even the positive effects of the Gospel Paul declared to this people were related less to Paul's personal competence than to the flowing of the Spirit..."*

## Salem Mennonite in Elida plans celebrations

Salem Mennonite Church in Elida is celebrating 175 years as a congregation during 2016. The church has planned a series of events to celebrate not only the congregation's history but also the history of the surrounding area and Anabaptist Christian traditions.

Two events have already taken place, a joint choir performance with Pike Mennonite Church and a program with John Roth,

professor of history at Goshen College.

Alan and Eleanor Kreider will visit Salem Mennonite on Sunday, July 24. They will speak both during the worship service and during a program at 1 p.m.

On Aug. 28 Perry Bush, professor of history at Bluffton University, will visit Salem Mennonite. He will explore local and regional Mennonite stories and reflect on the history of the Salem Mennonite congregation.

Finally, Salem Mennonite will hold its 175th anniversary celebration Sept. 24-25. The weekend will include Saturday night entertainment, a Sunday morning worship service, and an afternoon meal with outdoor activities.

See the Ohio Conference website ([www.ohiomennoniteconference.org](http://www.ohiomennoniteconference.org)) for a flier with more details about these programs. ■

## Women's Retreat to focus on sharing stories

"Sharing Your Story" will be the theme of the annual Women's Retreat Sept. 16-18 at Camp Luz in Kidron. Guest speakers for the weekend will be Vickie Esh and Kim Leichthy.

Women's Retreat is designed for women of all ages to come and spend time with others worshipping, laughing, and relaxing.

The cost of the retreat is \$90 for those staying the entire weekend, and \$75 for women staying Friday and Saturday only. For those not staying overnight at Camp Luz, the cost is \$75 for the entire weekend and \$60 for Friday and Saturday only. Part-time registration also is available for \$45 with additional charges for individual meals.



WOMEN'S RETREAT

All registrations are due Sept. 12. For more information, see the Camp Luz website at [www.campluz.com](http://www.campluz.com). ■

## Spiritual competence Continued from page 4

us." — 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

Paul declares that any power to be truly changed originates and continues through the working of the Spirit. And Paul shares in this powerful work only as a "fragile vessel" through which the Spirit accomplishes this work of power.

While many in the Church may demean the notion of "spirituality," perhaps we should ask if Paul would do so. If taken to mean the powerful working of the Spirit of God in common weak people and communities, why can we not admit that actually this could imply

something about how God works in our lives? Perhaps we in the Church have often feared that any admission of personal or corporate insufficiency would weaken our witness to those outside the Church. It seems to me, Paul would make quite the opposite argument. ■

# Salem breaks ground for new facility

**By Bob Sauder**

*Editor's note: How does a congregation decide when to build a new facility? The journey to new construction is often a long one, and the path is not always a straight line. Bob Sauder, the new moderator of the Ohio Conference, is a member of Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Mich. He reflects on the years-long process that congregation has experienced:*

We are a small congregation located in the corn and bean fields of Hillsdale County in southern Michigan. We can probably stuff around 120 people into our sanctuary for a morning service. At one point, our average attendance had grown to around 100. As we considered how to deal with the shortage of space, we haggled over two issues — whether we wanted to stay where we were or move to a place where we would have more visibility, and whether we wanted to remain together or split up and form two congregations. It seems in reflection that the discussions had taken their toll, and interest seemed to wane, as attendance fell off for a time.

As the years passed, we continued to grow in numbers, and more importantly, in my estimation, we grew from a church with a very small elementary Sunday school department to a church with an MYF of 20+ teenagers. So interest in building resurfaced, and we initiated the Mannah Project (Making A New Neighbor Around Here). This occurred in the late 1980s-early 1990s. We used a decision

tree process to determine whether we wanted to stay or move, add on or start new, etc. We had reached the point where we had a tentative blueprint drawn up and had presented it to the congregation for their approval.

Then one of our preaching ministers took a position at a neighboring church, and soon after our pastor also resigned to take a new position, and the building plan once again fell by the wayside.

We hired a team of three part-time pastors to lead us, and we began to grow again. Also, the makeup of our congregation changed again. Our youth graduated and were not replaced. I distinctly remember the Sunday several years later when we heard the first baby cry during a church service and what a sweet offering of praise that was. Also, the complexion of our congregation changed from a more traditional Mennonite background to a neighborhood church with many members who had suffered a deep hurts from other congregations.

Once again we began to dream seriously enough about a new building that we began to raise a building fund. It soon grew to



Members of Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Mich., pray during a groundbreaking ceremony for the congregation's new building.

more than \$150,000. We opened up the idea of moving to a more visible spot. The term we kept hearing was that Salem was the best-kept secret in Hillsdale County. The leadership had decided that our best option was to find a spot with much greater access and visibility, and we set up a group to begin looking for that. That didn't happen overnight, and suddenly 37 acres became available surrounding our present location, and we decided that God was leading us to stay where we were. We spent most of our fund to purchase the land, and in less than one year had replenished it.

We next decided on a structure with a combined fellowship hall/sanctuary and some classrooms as the way we wanted to go. The projected cost was \$750,000, and we decided that when we had half of that in hand, we would begin the con-

Continued on page 7

ABOUT PEOPLE

Pastoral notes

On April 24, 2016, Jared Chase was ordained for Christian ministry at Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City, Ohio, where he serves as youth pastor. Andy Stoner, Jared's mentor, opened the ordination service with some affirmations and a prayer. Pastor Rick Stoner shared the meditation, and Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford officiated the ordination ceremony, anointing, and prayer of blessing.

The ordination service took place at 4 p.m. A reception followed the service. ■



Jared Chase was ordained for Christian ministry April 24 at Sharon Mennonite Church. Pictured are (left-right) Sarah (holding Noah), Emma and Jared Chase, along with Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford.

Bluffton University

An incoming student at Bluffton University has been awarded the university's full-tuition Presidential Scholarship, valued at more than \$110,000 for four years.

Ethan Zaerr of Archbold, Ohio, is the scholarship recipient.

Zaerr, the son of Ronald and Elaine Zaerr, will be a graduate of Archbold High School this year. He is a member of Central Mennonite Church.

Zaerr was one of two winners of Bluffton's 18<sup>th</sup> annual Presidential Scholarship competition, which brought 69 high-achieving high school seniors to campus to write an essay in response to a faculty lecture and previously assigned readings. Invited students had grade point averages of 3.5 or higher and a composite score of at least 25 on the ACT or 1130 on the SAT.

The Presidential Scholarship is renewable with a GPA of 3.0 or above at Bluffton. ■

Blake Hershberger of Canton is one of two recipients of Bluffton University's 2016 Summer Discovery Grants. He will spend time in Guatemala this summer exploring his interest in international peace, justice and conflict studies.

He is the son of Barry and Tanya Hershberger and is a member of Beech Mennonite Church in Louisville. ■

New construction Continued from page 6

struction. That happened this month, and we have the footer and underground walls in and are getting set to pour the slab in the next couple of weeks so construction of the above-ground portion can begin. We

held a groundbreaking ceremony on May 1.

We have two members with construction experience that are acting as general contractors and are planning on doing as much as we can with volun-

teer labor and the help of three Amish crews in the area to help keep the costs down. The Amish crews appear to be very excited about helping us with this "barn-raising" adventure. ■

## Conference Calendar

### JUNE

4 Family Fun Day, Camp Luz, Kidron

24-26 Latino Families Encounter, Camp Luz, Kidron

### AUG

12-14 Girls' Jamboree, Camp Luz, Kidron

### SEPT

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

24-25 175th Anniversary Celebration, Salem Mennonite Church, Elida

30 Youth Worker Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### OCT

1 Youth Worker Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### NOV

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

**A conference for individuals concerned about faith formation is coming to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., this fall. Deep Faith: Anabaptist Faith Formation for All Ages will be held Oct. 6-8 at the seminary.**

Conference planners describe Deep Faith: Anabaptist Faith Formation for All Ages as a practical conference designed to empower Anabaptist pastors, teachers and lay leaders in the church to develop a robust understanding of life with Jesus and expand their imagination of faith formation for the 21st century.

Keynote speakers for the event include John Roberto of LifelongFaith Associates; Rachel Miller Jacobs, assistant professor of congregational formation at AMBS; and Brian Quan, pastor of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church.

Early registration costs will be \$125 for adults and \$50 for students until Sept. 14. More information will be available online as planning continues; see [mennoniteusa.org/deepfaith](http://mennoniteusa.org/deepfaith) for details. ■

## Back page briefings...

**Youth pastors and youth sponsors, mark your calendars:** Ohio Conference will hold a retreat for youth workers Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at Camp Luz in Kidron. Check upcoming issues of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel* for further details.

**Camp Luz in Kidron will host a Girls' Jamboree Aug. 12-14.** This event is intended for girls in grades 3-8. Activities will include

worship, input times, swimming and other camp favorites. Girls will need to register as a group. The cost for this weekend retreat is \$90 per person, and there is no registration charge for adult sponsors. For more information and online registration, go to [www.campluz.com](http://www.campluz.com).

**The annual Latino Families Encounter** will take place June 24-26 at Camp Luz in Kidron.

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