



OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

NOV/DEC 2016



ohiomennoniteconference.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Editorial
- Book released
- 4 Calling and caring for pastors
- 5 Youth leadership
- Resource Corner
- 6 Bluffton junior explores vocation and faith
- 7 About people
- 8 Back page briefings

Stories shared at Fall Mission Events

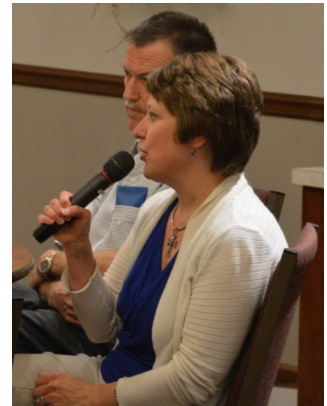
People from all across the Ohio Conference came to three regional gatherings to talk about how God is working in their congregations and communities. Jubilee Mennonite Church in Bellefontaine, Central Mennonite Church in Archbold and Berlin Mennonite Church hosted the three Fall Mission Events in October and November. These events are part of the Ohio Conference Year of Mission, which is taking place dur-

ing the 2016-17 Conference year.

At each Fall Mission Event, participants were reminded of several reasons for having an Ohio Conference Year of Mission:

- Mission is integral to the life and future of Ohio Conference and its congregations.
- Local congregations need practical training and opportunities in mission.
- Engaging in mission helps our congregations build

Continued on page 3



Melanie Miller shares a story of how members of Maple Grove Mennonite in Hartville engaged with a family in the church's neighborhood.

Pastors meet for Year of Covenant discussion

Pastors from around the Ohio Conference gathered Sept. 28 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church in Hartville for a Year of Covenant meeting. David B. Miller, associate professor of missional leadership at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, was the presenter.

Covenants contain both privileges and commitments, but it is the commitments which tend to be neglected, Miller

said. He noted that in Genesis God made a covenant with Abraham which called for Abraham to be a channel of God's blessing in the world, saying "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3b).

One of the scripture passages Miller focused on was Luke 4, which contains both the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and also the people's reaction to him in Naza-



David B. Miller

areth when he read from the book of Isaiah in the temple.

Continued on page 3

EDITORIAL

Listen to discern the next step



VOL. LXX, NO. 6

NOV/DEC 2016

Editor: Ann H. Leaman

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 email: 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.

“Dream out loud. What do you think the Spirit is saying about how your congregation can take one step forward in engaging mission in your context?”

I was part of the group who received this invitation at the Nov. 3 Fall Mission Event at Berlin Mennonite Church. As I sat with a table full of delegates from five different congregations, I didn’t have a clue about how to respond to this challenge. Several others at my table did speak about hopes for their own congregations, giving me something to think about. I,

however, did not add to the list of dreams.

What is the Spirit saying to my congregation? I’m still pondering. One thing is clear to me: If I am truly interested in the answer to that question, I need to slow down and make more time for listening to the Spirit.

Recently, I have been reading a book by Michael Frost titled *Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People*. Not surprisingly, Frost includes listening to the Holy Spirit as one of the essential habits of missional people, par-

ticularly because doing so works against the temptations of fear and laziness. He says, “Fear and laziness are mission killers....In fact, fear and laziness will motivate you to come up with dozens of reasons why you can’t or shouldn’t open yourself to others. It is the countermanding voice of the Spirit that will help us resist our worst impulses.”

It’s easy to think of reasons not to engage our communities. Will we do so, or are we ready to listen to the voice of the Spirit? What is our next step?

— ahl

New book focuses on evangelism

J. David Eshleman, who has worked with Ohio Conference congregations to provide revitalization resources, has written a new book, *Share the Irresistible Story of Jesus*, published by ChurchSmart Resources.

Many Christians feel free to talk about the weather,

news, cars, sports, or their job but have difficulty verbalizing their faith. *Share the Irresistible Story of Jesus* seeks to help Christians to communicate about the all-important message of salvation. Readers are invited to discover a whole new dimension of helping their

friends move forward in their faith journey.

For more information about *Share the Irresistible Story of Jesus*, email David Eshleman at dave@davechurchconsultant.org or phone 330-364-8239. ■

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 — cbohl@zoominternet.net
Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@gmail.com
Coordinator of Volunteers: Alys Short — alysashort@gmail.com

Fall Mission Events Continued from page 1

relationship and partnership with one another.

The Year of Mission began in March 2016 with a training event titled “Becoming Missional: Re-Learning How to Be Sent.” Fall Mission Event organizers reviewed some of the information from that training event, stressing that mission is being sent, and that to engage in mission, we need to cross cultural barriers instead of expecting others to cross cultural barriers to come to us.

In each location, a representative of a local congregation shared a brief story of how the congregation is engaging in mission in its context. Then the



participants, who were seated in small groups around tables, talked with each other about how they are engaging in mission, and several examples were shared with the entire group.

Participants also saw a brief video featuring mission strategist and speaker Alan Hirsch, and learned more about the

missional conference planned for March 2017. Alan Hirsch and his wife, Debra, will be the presenters for that conference. To learn more about the missional conference, see <http://bit.ly/2017MissionalConference>.

Each Fall Mission Event concluded with a report of several Conference business items. ■

Robb Esh of Valley View Mennonite Church reports about stories shared in his table group at the Nov. 3 Fall Mission Event. See <http://ohiomennoniteconference.org/fall-mission-events> for more Fall Mission Event photos.

Year of Covenant Continued from page 1

Miller also focused on the account of the Jerusalem Council as found in Acts 15, when the leaders sought the leading of the Holy Spirit as they discerned the way forward. In the missional church, God gets to lead. What we need to do is discern God’s leading, he said. We need to be looking for the signs of the Spirit.

Pastors were seated at round tables for times of discussion. As a visual symbol, Miller placed piles of stones on each table. He said that stones can symbolize many things. Stones can be a weapon; stones can be a marker; stones can be an altar, or a witness. When we pick up stones, we are simultaneously burdened and arming ourselves, he noted. The pastors were invited to take stones from the

piles and to consider which metaphorical stones they need to lay down.



In addition to hearing from David Miller, the pastors had times of discussion in table groups and shared in a time of worship led by Kevin Himes and Bill Seymour.

Following this meeting, pastors were surveyed about their impressions of the day. Several common themes emerged:

- Appreciation for the con-

versation around the tables and a desire for more time for these conversations

- A desire to have more conversation about the application of the biblical texts to our current processes as a Conference
- A desire to plan for times in the future when pastors can study and talk together about issues that we are currently facing
- Appreciation for a time of worship together
- The recognition that we will do well to intentionally tend to building trust between pastors

A third Year of Covenant pastors’ meeting will take place sometime in January. ■

STAFF REFLECTIONS

Calling and caring for pastors

By Ralph Reinford
Regional Pastor

As a regional pastor, a fair amount of my time is spent working with congregational search groups and looking for new pastors. These are uncertain times, and I often get asked if there are available pastors. I also get asked why anyone would want to be a pastor.

It is obvious to me that God has not given up on his church because he is still calling people to be pastors and particularly young people who have a heart to serve God and the church. It may seem irrational why anyone would want to do that.

As in life itself, there is a cycle to the rhythm of church life. When congregations are asked about their past, they often talk in terms of who their pastors were and how long they served. In fact, some have Halls of Fame with photos of their pastors lining the foyer or special rooms and glass cases showing the historical line of saints. These often give insight into the congregation along with fascinating stories.

It always interesting to reflect on the longevity of pastors and ask what the average time frame is or what is a good

length of time to serve in a pastorate. The answers vary according to who you are talking to, but I believe 12 to 14 years is a good tenure. Transition is often good for both the congregation and the pastor. It realigns the mission and priorities and opens the door to new opportunities and fresh starts. It often moves congregations from being pastor-centered to greater involvement from everyone.

I could say a lot more about calling leaders: the chemistry, the importance of character, competency, bringing someone in from the outside, and understanding your church's culture. But I will simply say, do not forget to look within for your next pastor. God provides gifts in each fellowship, and it is our responsibility to call forth, develop, train, and provide opportunities for new leaders to be discovered. It's really a part of discipleship.

Yes, it is difficult to find and discern the right pastor for the right church, but it is also very rewarding. To see search groups come together and grow into discernment groups is like watching your children grow up. With lots of prayer and meetings together it is gratifying to see how God works and the peace that comes with discovering the appropriate fit.

An important aspect of a healthy congregation is the ongoing care for the pastor and



family. In times of pastoral transition, having someone in the congregation to walk alongside the pastor and their family is crucial. Many congregations have a personnel and congregational relations group which serves as a liaison between the congregation and pastor. If a pastor and family do not have this kind of support system, they end up spending too much emotional energy dealing with ordinary things like health insurance, reviews, and congregational complaints. A pastor has enough to do, and it is easy to feel isolated and that no one cares. It sometimes becomes an "us versus them" situation. There are many ways to come alongside your pastor and family to show you care and are invested in the ministry of the Kingdom.

Ralph Reinford has been a regional pastor with the Ohio Conference since 2011. He primarily works with congregations in the eastern part of the Conference. ■

"Yes, it is difficult to find and discern the right pastor for the right church but it is also very rewarding.... With lots of prayer and meetings together it is gratifying to see how God works and the peace that comes with discovering the appropriate fit."

LEAD3D focuses on youth leadership

Do you know a junior or senior in high school with budding leadership potential? LEAD3D (Discover, Develop, Disciple) is the leadership development program just for them!

During two weekend retreats at Camp Luz in Kidron, students will evaluate their natural leadership tendencies, learn about principles of Christ-centered leadership and take steps toward discovering and developing a personal leadership style. Intentional discipleship by a trusted mentor throughout the program will draw on cross-generational wisdom, while living out our desire to disciple other Kingdom leaders.



Teen participants in the LEAD3D program and their mentors meet with LEAD3D directors at Camp Luz in Kidron to learn about principles of Christ-centered leadership.

The next program dates are March 10-11, 2017, and Aug. 18-19, 2017. (Full attendance is required for youth and mentors.) For more information and to apply, visit [Facebook.com/LEAD3D](https://www.facebook.com/LEAD3D) or email info@lead3d.org. Cost is \$495 per youth/mentor pair.

The Ohio Conference is offering a \$200 scholarship per mentor/mentee pair for those participants from Ohio Conference congregations. The Conference will give up to five scholarships, awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. ■

RESOURCE CORNER

Everence resource focuses on generous living

By Lois Bontrager
Ohio Conference
Resource Advocate

Here's a great resource from Everence: *Generous Living in a Self-Centered World: Biblical Models of Generosity*. This resource is a six-week course in which you will be introduced to a variety of generosity models found in scripture. Our challenge as 21st-century followers of Jesus is to take the lessons described in scripture, understand their context and then apply the time-tested principles to our own day. This

Generous living in a self-centered world
Biblical models of generosity

What's your generosity model?
Over the course of the next several weeks, you will be introduced to a variety of generosity models found in scripture. Some will be familiar and others may be new to you. The hope is that as a result of this study, you will be able to identify which model is most applicable to your own life and practice of generosity. Here are a few that will be highlighted along the way:

- The tithe model
- Tithing model
- Sacrificial giving model
- Proportional giving model
- Kingdom economics model
- The two talents model
- The Bread of Life model

Why is generosity and why we need to talk about it?
Our challenge as 21st-century followers of Jesus is to take the lessons described in scripture, understand their context and then apply the time-tested principles to our own day. This is no small challenge, but with the proper mindset and the right resources, it can be done. This resource is one of the best ways to do this. We will explore a variety of biblical stories and discuss the connection with our first-world American context.

Everence®

with the Apostle Paul. You will explore a variety of biblical stories and discuss the connection with our first-world American context.

The best part of this study is that you can go to the Everence website and download all the material free of charge! See <http://www.everence.com/resources-for-adults> to download.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me: Lois Bontrager at loisbon1950@gmail.com or give me a call at 330-705-8488. ■

is no small challenge, but worth the effort. In this study, you will start with the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4 and end

Bluffton junior explores vocation and faith in Guatemala

Blake Hershberger, second from left, received a Summer Discovery Grant from Bluffton University to live and study in Guatemala during the summer of 2016. He was able to live with a host family while studying there.



Bluffton University — During the summer of 2016, Blake Hershberger '18, an international peace, justice and conflict studies major from Canton, Ohio, immersed himself in the Guatemalan culture. Hershberger, a member of Beech Mennonite Church in Louisville, lived in Guatemala City for one month with the aid of a \$1,500 Summer Discovery Grant awarded by Bluffton University to students who are interested in exploring the intersection of vocation and faith.

“The nice thing about the Summer Discovery Grant is that it doesn’t put you in a box. There are a variety of ways you can use the grant,” said Hershberger. “It’s there for you to continue your learning and continue to discover your vocation during the summer.”

Hershberger definitely doesn’t like to be put in a box. Along with an academic advisor, he developed his own major at

Bluffton and he has been accepted into an alternate semester abroad program. In the future, Hershberger wants to do humanitarian and peace work through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) or Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

He was first introduced to these organizations by his parents who raised him to be conscious of social justice in everyday life. “Growing up in a Mennonite church also makes me very aware of MCC and their missions. Having people in my life that care about social and humanitarian issues, whether it is domestic or international, has made me aware of their existence.”

While in Guatemala, Hershberger lived with a host family and studied Spanish at Central America Study and Service (CASAS) through the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary (Semilla).

“I wanted to go to a place I’ve never been to so I could learn more about the culture. One, because that’s what I’m really interested in and two, because I think it will give me a better sense of where I would like to work,” he said.

On a typical day, Hershberger spent the morning in Spanish-language lessons at CASAS and then spent time with his host family. On the weekends, he visited with his host family’s extended family and traveled both inside and outside the city, including time spent at some Mayan ruins sites and climbing a volcano.

The most important aspect of the experience was overcoming the language barrier. “What I came to realize is that all of these important classes I’m taking at Bluffton are helpful in their own setting, but if I can’t speak the language fluently it’s harder to actually apply what I already know,” said Hershberger. “It’s much harder to communicate, connect, and work with people if I don’t have the extra knowledge of the language.”

Hershberger is already working on his next adventure. In the spring of 2017, Hershberger will spend a semester in Amman, Jordan, which he hopes will establish another global setting for him to consider for his career path.

“One of the things I really want to do is not only learn about

Continued on page 7

ABOUT PEOPLE

David Edward Diener

David Edward Diener, 98, a former pastor of West Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon, died Oct. 16 in Souderton, Pennsylvania. A memorial service was held at West Clinton Mennonite Church on Oct. 24.

David Edward, who used the name Edward from childhood, graduated from Hesston Academy in 1938, Hesston College in 1942, Goshen College in 1943, and Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1944.

Edward served as an ordained minister at Clarence Center Mennonite Church in Clarence,

New York, from 1944-1965; Hartville Mennonite Church in Hartville, from 1965-1970; and West Clinton Mennonite Church from 1970-1988. After that, he served as an interim pastor in a number of local congregations.

During most of Edward's years as a pastor, he worked bivocationally. In the earlier years, he did residential construction. Later he worked with his wife at Das Essen Haus, a restaurant in Pettisville, which they owned and operated from 1972-1999. After that, they owned and operated a small

bed and breakfast in Archbold for several years.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Esther; his daughter, Margaret; and six brothers, Daniel, Clayton, Truman, Paul, Willard, and Harold Glen.

He is survived by three children, Larry Linford (married to Doris Steiner) of Souderton, Pennsylvania; David Edward (married to Carol Dey) of Ft. Collins, Colorado; and Diane Naomi (married to Ibrahim Omondi) of Nairobi, Kenya; nine grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. ■

Paul King

Paul Oliver King, 94, a former interim pastor for two Ohio Conference congregations, died Oct. 29 in his home at Walnut Hills Retirement Community, Walnut Creek.

He was born on Dec. 21, 1921, to Elizabeth Augsburg King and Edward King in Elida. Paul was committed to following Christ, and was a lifelong member of the Mennonite Church. He served with the Mennonite Central Committee in various assignments throughout the U.S. and in Italy.

He graduated from Goshen College with a degree in sociology and studied at the Mennonite seminary in Goshen, Indiana. On June 7, 1952, Paul married Lois Meyer, who survives.

He served as pastor in the Mennonite Church for more than 35 years, with churches in Illinois, and after retirement, in Ohio. He served as interim pastor at Berlin Mennonite Church and Martins Creek Mennonite Church.

Surviving in addition to his wife of 64 years, are children, Sara

(Marlin Yoder) of Fresno, David (Laurel) and Daniel, both of Wichita, Kansas, and Miriam Blosser (Michael) of Sarasota, Florida; seven granddaughters; six great-grandchildren; and a brother, Robert of Sarasota, Florida.

He was preceded in death by four siblings, John, Freda Milne, Betty Albrecht and Clara Breneman.

Memorial services were held Nov. 12 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church in Millersburg. ■

Vocation and faith

Continued from page 6

multiple cultures but also go to as many countries and as many cultures in those countries as I can."

As Hershberger continues college and moves toward a vocation of international peace and justice, he considers Bluffton

and his own Mennonite roots to play a key role in his understanding of global conflict. "I didn't really think much about what pacifism and what that stuff meant until the end of my freshman year in college. I started to think that maybe that

could be a very valuable way of living and solving problems." With a fresh perspective on global context and vocational directions, Hershberger looks to expand peace, justice and resolution on a global level. ■

Conference Calendar

JAN

12 Year of Covenant Meeting for Pastors, location TBD

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

APR

8 Spring Day of Inspiration, Ohio Mennonite Women, Crown Hill Mennonite, Rittman

AUG

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

curriculum produced by MennoMedia and Brethren Press, is accepting applications for curriculum writers. The curriculum is for children age three through grade 8. Accepted writers must attend a Writers Conference in Virginia, March 2-5, 2017. Shine pays for meals and lodging during the conference and covers reasonable travel expenses. More details are available at <https://shinecurriculum.com/writers>. Application and sample session deadline is Dec. 1, 2016.

Mennonite Church USA Convention 2017 is coming up July 4-8 in Orlando, with the theme "Love Is a Verb." A new flier provides more details on speakers and other events. Also consider donating to the Convention Scholarship Fund or partnering with a congregation that can't afford to send people on its own, and think about ways you can show love to your family, friends and community. You can learn more at <http://convention.mennoniteusa.org> or find the convention on Facebook or Twitter. ■

Back page briefings...

To encourage congregations and conferences to "spread the peace" in and beyond Mennonite Church USA, the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA has small start-up grants available.

Grants of \$1,000 are given as Peace and Justice Support Network (PJSN) funding allows. The goal is to distribute \$5,000 annually. PJSN will accept applications through Dec. 31, 2016. For more details, see the PJSN website: <http://bit.ly/SpreadthePeace>.

The 2017 Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) of the Ohio Conference will take place Friday and Saturday, March 24-25, 2017, at Central Christian School in Kidron. The theme of the 2017 ACA, based on Luke 10:25-37, will be "Who is my Neighbor?"

Immediately preceding ACA, Ohio Conference is sponsoring a two-day Missional Conference with Alan and Debra Hirsch at Kidron Mennonite Church March 23-24.

Shine: Living in God's Light, the Sunday school

OHIO MENNONITE
EVANGEL
News & Views of Ohio Conference

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