

# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

MAR/APR 2018



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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*'Gathered and Sent' is theme of 2018 Assembly*

## Setting priorities for Ohio Conference

**What valuable services does Conference provide to your congregation and pastor? What are the activities of Conference that you could do without? Delegates to the 2018 Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) of the Ohio Conference discussed these questions when they met at Bluffton University March 9-10. Two hundred seven people participated in ACA, including delegates from 41 congregations.**

Delegate feedback to the discussion questions will help



Missional Consultant Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg (right) invited participants interested in being part of a missional network to plot their congregations on a map of Ohio.

the Ohio Conference Leadership Team as it sets priorities for the future. Delegates also gave ideas for new programs

and services that they would like to see Conference provide.

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## Seminar to focus on 'Growing Young'

Kidron Mennonite Church is sponsoring a "Growing Young" seminar on Saturday, April 14, from 9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. This seminar will focus on making young people a priority in your church.

Speaker Dr. David "Duffy" Robbins, professor of youth ministry at Eastern University, will share about Keychain Leadership, empathy, taking

Jesus' messages seriously, and creating a warm community that draws people in.

There is no cost for the seminar. Lunch can be included upon request for a \$10 fee. See the [Growing Young Flier](#) for details. Register by **April 9** by calling 330-857-3461 or by emailing [kris@kidronmennonite.com](mailto:kris@kidronmennonite.com).



Dr. David "Duffy" Robbins

# Missional Conference focuses on evangelism and discipleship

Just prior to Annual Conference Assembly, the Ohio Conference held the Gathered and Sent Missional Conference at Bluffton University March 8-9. One hundred eight people from across the Conference participated in this event.

During four sessions, speakers Meghan Good and Marvin Lorenzana challenged common assumptions about evangelism and discipleship. Meghan Good, the teaching pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Arizona, focused on evangelism, and Marvin Lorenzana, the discipleship initiatives director for Mennonite Mission Network, focused on discipleship.

Meghan Good asked participants to consider questions such as, "How is this [activity of our church] helping us fulfill our mission as ambassadors of reconciliation to God? How is it getting in the way?"

Marvin Lorenzana said, "Discipleship is all about



Meghan Good

training (disciplining) our spiritual ears to hear God's voice." He defined missional discipleship as the type of discipleship that multiplies (i.e., disciples who make disciples who make disciples).

In addition to presentations by the speakers, the conference included panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions with the speakers, and a chance for everyone attending to participate in a simulation of a missional discipleship group. These groups, which meet for



Marvin Lorenzana

about an hour weekly, usually include three people and focus on accountability, scripture and prayer. The groups had five key questions to guide their discussions.

Each missional conference participant received a copy of the book *Reunion: The Good News of Jesus for Seekers, Saints, and Sinners* by Bruxy Cavey and a copy of *Growing the Church in the Rural Neighborhood* by Brad Roth, a booklet in Mennonite Mission Network's *Missio Dei* series. ■

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Editor: Ann H. Leaman

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### CONFERENCE MINISTER ANNOUNCEMENT

Conference Moderator Bob Sauder made a statement about the search for a conference minister. (A copy of the statement is on page 4.) The Leadership Team has concluded that hiring a conference minister at a half-time capacity is not a healthy thing for any candidate or the Conference at this time, considering the scope of the position's duties.

Bob Sauder also announced that Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford, who has been taking on many of

the conference minister duties since the departure of Transitional Conference Leader George O'Reilly, will take three months for respite beginning in May, and then will return to Conference work after that time. He will transition to a half-time position as regional pastor on Nov. 1 or when a new conference minister is in place.

At a later business session, delegates passed a resolution of appreciation for the work of Regional Pastors Ralph Reinford and Cliff Brubaker. (See the text of the resolution below.)

## Resolution in appreciation of regional pastors

We the delegates of Ohio Mennonite Conference wish to convey our deepest respect and appreciation to Ralph Reinford and Cliff Brubaker for faithfully and gracefully carrying heavy responsibilities for the good of the Conference. We acknowledge that we have not

always appreciated nor affirmed them nor recognized the burdens they have carried on our behalf. We pledge our continued prayers and support to them during the transitions to come. We ask God to bless and reward these two servants with abundant peace and joy. ■



### SPENDING PLAN APPROVED

Delegates approved a spending plan for the 2018-19 fiscal year. The plan calls for spending totaling \$380,150. While introducing the spending plans to delegates, Stewardship Ministry Co-Chair Melanie Miller noted that giving to the Conference during 2017-18 has exceeded projections. A copy of the 2018-19 spending plan is posted on the "Assembly Documents" page of the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/ACADocuments>.

### RELEASE OF CONGREGATIONS

Delegates approved a motion to release two congregations which have chosen to leave the Ohio Conference during 2017-18, Leetonia Mennonite Church and Lima Mennonite Church. Leetonia Mennonite Church voted on Nov. 30 to leave the Ohio Conference and Mennonite Church USA. The congregation has joined the Evana Network.

Lima Mennonite Church had been a dual-conference congregation.

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ACA photos: At left, Dan King (left) and Haroldo Nunes lead a workshop for delegates, "Healing Cultural Tensions in the Church." At right, Regina Wenger of Central Mennonite Church reports on her table group's discussion. Photos by Bryan Leaman. To see more ACA photos, go to <http://bit.ly/ACAvideophotos>.



## *Leadership Team decides against hiring half-time conference leader*

# Full-time conference minister sought

**By Bob Sauder**  
**Ohio Conference Moderator**

**After many hours spent discussing the conference minister position and a very comprehensive search process, the Search Committee and the Leadership Team are in agreement that hiring someone at a half-time capacity is not a healthy thing for any candidate or the Conference at this time.**

We apologize to the Conference staff and to those of you who have counseled us from the beginning that half-time was not a good idea. The plus side is that this discussion has helped us to focus on what it is we really expect from this position and where we as a Conference hope to direct our efforts.

I feel we did a good job of defining the duties of what the conference minister has done in the past. And we did a fair job of prioritizing those functions that were most important and things that could be left undone if and when time became a factor. At the same time, we added responsibilities that we felt were important in moving the Conference in the direction of becoming more mission-oriented.

I will say that I pushed the hardest to keep moving forward with the half-time position. My

goal was to alleviate the extra burden and stress that we had put on the staff. In retrospect, I did not realize that in making this a half-time position, we would in effect be expecting the present staff to pick up the pieces that were not covered, increasing their workload and stress rather than decreasing it.

I apologize for that miscalculation. My sincerest hope was that I would be introducing a new conference minister at these meetings [Annual Conference Assembly] and that we could spend the next two years continuing to watch the Conference become a vital instrument in God's Kingdom work.

So, where do we go from here? Ralph Reinford has faithfully picked up many of the duties of the conference minister along with his full-time regional pastor's role for the past two years. But in the process, he has been stretched in unhealthy ways. In January, the Leadership Team offered Ralph a three-month leave with no strings attached. Ralph returned a counter-proposal to the Leadership Team in February. His proposal was to take the months of May-July for respite and regrouping. On his return he will continue his present duties until a conference minister is hired or until Nov. 1, when he will reduce his time to .5 FTE and resume only his regional pastor responsibilities.

Leadership Team has committed to working with Ralph and Cliff Brubaker to determine ways in which we can keep their workload at that level.

Leadership Team has accepted this very gracious offer. We have asked the search group to reopen the search for a full-time conference minister with skills as a transformational leader who will equip us for navigating the opportunities and challenges for the church today. Interest in Anabaptism is rising, and Ohio Conference wants a conference minister to help us extend our witness.

The Leadership Team is committed to continuing to look for ways we can adjust staff responsibilities and workloads that will allow us to create what we believe will be an effective and sustainable job description for the conference minister. At the same time, we will do our best to continue to offer our congregations the support they need and maintain the energy and momentum that the Gathered and Sent initiatives have brought to the Conference.

Thank you for your prayers and counsel, and we ask you to continue to support us in the coming months as we move forward in the process of finding a conference minister.

*Conference Moderator Bob Sauder shared this statement with delegates at the 2018 Annual Conference Assembly. ■*

**"We have asked the search group to reopen the search for a full-time conference minister with skills as a transformational leader who will equip us for navigating the opportunities and challenges for the church today."**



gation with membership in both Central District Conference and the Ohio Conference. After a time of processing the decision, the congregation decided to affiliate solely with the Central District Conference. Lima Mennonite's pastor, Emily Hedrick, read a statement from the congregation and expressed her appreciation for the positive experiences she has had with the Ohio Conference. Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker led the delegates in a prayer for Leetonia Mennonite and Lima Mennonite.

### MISSIONAL CONSULTANT REPORTS

Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg, who is serving Ohio Conference as a missional consultant on a part-time volunteer basis, reported on her work with the Conference. She described herself as a "disturber and equipper" at Zion Mennonite Church, and told delegates that a missional movement has to come from the grassroots up. She brought a map of Ohio to the meetings and invited delegates to plot their church on the map to indicate their desire

to participate in the missional network in Ohio Conference, as well as giving their contact information. She asked delegates to consider the question, "What are you being called to do?"

### MISSIONAL STORIES SHARED

Delegates also heard stories about how God is at work in the Conference. Jared Chase shared the story of Sharon Mennonite Church's summer work camp. Larry and Ginny Cress talked about the Wheelhouse, a ministry in Lima which helps provide bicycles for people who need transportation. Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg told delegates about Zion Mennonite Church's development of a collaborative ministry team. (You can learn more about Sharon Mennonite's work camp and the Wheelhouse by listening to episodes of the Ohio Conference Cast. Go to <http://bit.ly/SharonWorkCamp> and <http://bit.ly/WheelhouseLima> to hear these episodes.)

### DELEGATES WORSHIP

In addition to business, dele-



gates also spent time in worship. Speakers for the worship services were Meghan Good and Marvin Lorenzana, who were the presenters for the Gathered and Sent Missional Conference which preceded ACA. At the Friday evening worship service, which had the theme, "The Church Needs to be Evangelistic to be the Church," Meghan Good spoke about "The One That Got Away," focusing on Jesus' announcement of his ministry in Luke 4 and on the Parable of the Lost Sheep. On Saturday morning, Marvin Lorenzana spoke about discipleship in his message, "Igniting a Culture of Multiplication."

In other business, the delegates:

- Attended workshops on a variety of topics;
- Approved the minutes of the 2017 ACA;
- Attended a plenary session featuring speakers Meghan Good and Marvin Lorenzana;
- Were introduced to pastors with new assignments in the Ohio Conference;
- Affirmed the personnel slate

ACA photos: At left, delegates report on their table group discussions. At right, Larry Cress of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, tells delegates about the Wheelhouse, a bicycle ministry in Lima. Photos by Bryan Leaman. To see more ACA photos, go to <http://bit.ly/ACAvideophotos>.

Marvin Lorenzana, one of two featured speakers at ACA, talks to delegates during a plenary session on Saturday afternoon.



presented by the Gifts Discernment Ministry (see pages 8-10 for more information about these volunteers);

— Heard from Credentialing

Ministry Chair Andy Stoner, reporting on the activity of the Credentialing Ministry and explaining the procedure for dealing with pastoral sexual misconduct cases;

— Heard a report from Myron Weaver, pastor of Berlin Mennonite Church, about the “Gathered” initiative, which has focused in the past year on having pastors meet together;

— Heard a report from Jacob Dodson, pastor of Wooster Mennonite Church, about the “Sent” initiative, which is encouraging missional activity in the Conference and developing opportunities for missional education such as

the Gathered and Sent Mission-al Conference;

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

— Heard from Bill Seymour and Darrin Snyder Belousek about the work of the Voice Task Force;

— Heard reports from Karla Minter, Mennonite Mission Network representative; Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, Central Christian School superintendent; Andrew Michaels, Camp Luz director; Barb Martin of Brazo en Brazo; Haroldo Nunes, executive director of Open Arms Hispanic Ministry; and Terry Shue, director of Leadership Development for Mennonite Church USA;

— Celebrated communion. ■

## *Feasibility study to look at ways to trim Conference office costs* **Stewardship Ministry seeks volunteers**

The Ohio Conference Stewardship Ministry Team has spent some time recently brainstorming ways to save money for the Conference. One possible area of focus is the expenses of the Conference office located in Kidron.

Consequently, the Stewardship Ministry would like to form a group to do a feasibility study. This group would review the current Conference office structure to see if/where/how

costs may be trimmed. The group would be a volunteer-based, independent study group, looking at things such as technology use, and ways to increase effectiveness and reduce costs.

If you understand technology and operational efficiencies and would be interested in helping with this study, or you know someone who could be an asset to this volunteer group, please contact a member of the Stew-

ardship Ministry.

— Stewardship Ministry Team

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Dean Falb, co-chair —  
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Christine Yoder —  
[scyoder84@gmail.com](mailto:scyoder84@gmail.com) ■



## Workshop focuses on 'Reading the Bible with Jesus'

Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron hosted a four-session Bible study on the book of Mark with Bryan Moyer Suderman, "Reading the Bible with Jesus," Feb. 16-17. Fifty people participated.

On Sunday, Feb. 18, Bryan Moyer Suderman visited Summit Mennonite Church in Barberton, taking part in the morning worship service and performing a community concert for all ages.

An itinerant Bible teacher and singer-songwriter from Kitchener, Ontario, Bryan Moyer Suderman has spent more than 25 years finding creative ways to engage people of all ages in scripture. He is a teaching associate of the Church Leadership Center of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

Congregations partnering in this effort to bring Bryan Moyer Suderman to Ohio included Martins Mennonite in Orrville, Summit Mennonite in Barberton, and Sonnenberg Mennonite



Bryan Moyer Suderman led "Reading the Bible with Jesus," a four-session Bible study on the book of Mark. Photo by Judy King.

and Salem Mennonite in Kidron. Organizers also received a ministry grant from the Ohio Conference to help fund these events.

To see photos from the Bible study event, go to <http://bit.ly/ReadingtheBiblePhotos>. ■

## Ted & Co. coming to Springfield

*Laughter is Sacred Space*, performed by Ted & Company Theaterworks, is coming to Springfield, Ohio, on Friday, May 4, at 7 p.m. at the John Legend Theater, 700 S. Limestone St., Springfield.

The event is a collaborative effort of Southside Mennonite

Church, Huber Mennonite Church and NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) along with several mental healthcare resources. The Ohio Conference also has provided grant money in support of this event. See the event flier for more details: <http://bit.ly/LaughterSacredSpace>.

This performance is free and open to the public, but those attending are asked to reserve tickets through Eventbrite. Go to <http://bit.ly/LaughterSacredSpaceSpringfield> to reserve your ticket. ■

# 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:** Bob Sauder

**Home congregation:** Salem Mennonite Church, Wal-dron, Michi-gan

**Occupation:** Retired teacher, coach, sports official/self-employed carpenter/cooper

**Previous service:** In congregation — Church council, elder, Sunday school teacher, Church Chair, preach occasionally; in Conference — delegate, moderator

**Family Information:** Wife, Pamela Ruffer Sauder (married 45 years); children, Mary Sauder and Kelly Sauder Neff; seven grandchildren (six boys and one girl)

**Goals:** Install Conference Minister, continue to develop Gathered and Sent initiatives, engage with Mennonite Church USA in



the Journey Forward process  
**Hobbies/special interests:** Spending time with the grand-kids, woodworking, construction manager for Habitat for Humanity of Fulton County, working as interpreter at Sauder Village, reading when I can find time

## **Gifts Discernment Ministry — Chair**

**Name:** Mel Hathaway

**Home Congregation:** Sonnenberg Men-nonite Church, Kidron

**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



## **Ministry Development Team —Worship Focus**

**Name:** Steve Schmid

**Home congregation:**

Wooster Mennonite Church

**Occupation:** Retired leader of SmithFoods Inc. in Orr-ville, Ohio

**Previous**

**service:** Member of Ministry



Development Team; At Wooster Mennonite Church — treasurer, Sunday school teacher, MYF sponsor; Long time ago — summer volunteer service in Colorado, voluntary service in Philadelphia, Mississippi

**Family Information:** Married to Cathy, who has been very active in our church. She was our lead elder, taught Sunday school, led the team planning worship services. Our children are Nathan and his wife, Ashleigh, who have our only grand-son, Kai; Cullen and her hus-band, Jeremy; and Amanda.

**Goals:** To participate actively in meetings so I can contribute to Ministry Development Team's challenges and activities

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Bike riding, reading, learning more about and participating in activities addressing solar and bio-energy and global warming, working outside in our yard

## **Ministry Development Team — Faith Focus**

**Name:** Ken Sims

**Home congregation:** Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City

**Occupation:** Everence cli-ent services representative

**Previous**

**service:** Two years serving on the Ministry Development Team of Ohio Conference; six years serving on the Spiritual Leadership Team at Sharon Mennonite Church

**Family information:** Blessed to be married to Grace (48 years in April); three wonderful adult children; seven fantastic



Continued on page 9



# Volunteers

Continued from page 8

grandchildren

**Goals:** Continue to serve God as he calls me to be his bond-servant for Jesus Christ

**Hobbies/special interests:** Avid book reader, endurance sports car racing fan, gearhead

## Ministry Development Team

**Name:** Nancy Roynon

**Home congregation:** Central Mennonite Church, Archbold

**Occupation:** Registered nurse

**Previous service:** Worship

Team member, Congregational Board Chair, Ohio Mennonite Women Chairperson (which placed me on Conference Council), MC USA delegate

**Family information:** Widowed, four married children and nine grandchildren

**Goals:** To understand the needs of the Ohio Conference congregations which can be enhanced by the Ministry Development Team, to vision with them and develop at least two programs specific to those needs

**Hobbies/special interests:** Visiting family, running, gardening, and creative cooking

## Credentialing Ministry

**Name:** Vickie Yoder

**Home congregation:** Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City

**Occupation:** Board certified chaplain, pastoral counselor

**Previous service:** Member of Creden-



tialing Ministry; served two terms on the Gifts Discernment Ministry; vice president of Ohio Mennonite Women; Ohio Conference ACA Planning Committee; Mennonite Chaplains Association, President; Mennonite Health Services, Planning Committee

**Family information:** Spouse — Bob Yoder, retired pastor; two daughters, Mary (Jason) Sims and Bobbi (Jason) Watkins; seven grandchildren, Reign Yoder, Josiah and Levi Sims, Abigail, Eliza, Jonas, and Crist Watkins

**Goals:** Participate, encourage, and instill hope as we do the work of the Credentialing Ministry in humbleness and courage, as the Holy Spirit leads us

**Hobbies/special interests:** K9 Handler for Therapy/Service Dog: Shadow (85#) and Therapy Dog: Princess (4#); Member of Madison County Crises Response and NOVA (National Organization of Victims Assistance); crocheting; knitting; reading

## Credentialing Ministry

**Name:** LaVerne Yousey

**Home congregation:** Summit Mennonite Church, Barberton

**Occupation:** Professor of Respiratory Care Emeritus, department head of

Allied Health Department at University of Akron, program director for the Respiratory Therapy Program

**Previous service:** Volunteer with MCC Connections, served Summit Mennonite Church as church moderator, chair of Stewardship and Finance Commission, chair of Worship and



Nurture Commission, church treasurer, and Conference delegate

**Family information:** Widower; two children; three grandchildren

**Goals:** To serve Ohio Conference in the work of this Commission

**Hobbies/special interests:** Knitting, reading, glass blowing, volunteering with Barberton Area Community Ministry, American Lung Association, Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, preparing material to weave at MCC Connections

## Stewardship Ministry

— Co-chair

**Name:** Dean Falb

**Home congregation:**

Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville

**Occupation:** Retired banker and church treasurer

**Previous service:** Elder and congregation chair, Conference Ministry Development Team and Stewardship Ministry Team member

**Family information:** Married to Jan; one son, Matt; and two grandchildren

**Goals:** Continue evaluating ways of efficient use of Conference resources and seek ways to financially support emerging programs to strengthen congregational life

**Hobbies/special interests:** Study and application of organic practices to our farming operation, travel, and service projects, including Mennonite Disaster Service



Continued on page 10

# Volunteers

Continued from page 9

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Stefani Hathaway

**Home congregation:** Toledo Mennonite Church

**Occupation:**

Psychologist

**Previous service:**

Ohio

Conference

Gifts Discernment Ministry

for the past two years. I've been in different positions at Toledo Mennonite Church over the years — Leadership Team, Council, youth sponsor, etc.

**Family information:** Single.

Family includes parents, three sisters, two brothers-in-law, four nephews, and two nieces in Missouri, Ohio, and California.

**Goals:** To build up my connections with people in other congregations across the Conference

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Travel, reading, cooking, dance (tango and ballroom), photography

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Larry Short

**Home congregation:** Zion

Mennonite

Church,

Archbold

**Occupation:**

Currently

semi-retired

farmer, raising

corn and soy-

beans; previously was in human

resource management at

Sauder Woodworking, Arch-

bold, Ohio

**Previous service:** Over the years was privileged to serve in a variety of church positions, including Sunday school teacher, elder, Discernment, Finance and many other church activi-



ties. I was also honored to serve as delegate to Ohio Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

**Family information:** Married to Elaine; three adult children; two wonderful grandchildren

**Goals:** I am committed to the Mennonite Church and the Ohio Conference and will work with the others to fulfill the mission of the Conference.

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Travel — I love visiting other countries and cultures. A sports fan, especially following the Buckeyes.

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Eldina Nussbaum

**Home congregation:** Crown

Hill Mennonite

Church, Orr-

ville

**Occupation:**

Retired elementary teacher, current co-

custodian at

church with her husband

**Previous service:** Conference

delegate, served as secretary

for the state WMSC in the '70s,

at Camp Luz was a summer

staffer, board member and

worked in the camp office

**Family information:** Hus-

band, David Nussbaum

**Goals:** To find willing volun-

teers to fill Ohio Conference

positions

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Gardening, including raising

calla lilies and sharing them with

friends; volunteering at World

Crafts in Kidron, Ohio



## Stewardship Ministry —

**Stewardship Focus**

**Name:** Marion Beyeler

**Home congregation:** Orr-

ville Mennon-

ite Church

**Occupation:**

Retired volun-

teer

**Previous**

**service:**

Member of

Stewardship

Ministry, Moderator

**Family Information:** Spouse,

Jane; four adult children

**Goals:** To experience OMC

conference and congregations

as healthy Jesus followers

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Grandchildren, outdoor activi-

ties, travel



## Stewardship Ministry —

**Finance Focus**

**Name:** Christine Yoder

**Home congregation:** Oak

Grove Men-

nonite

Church,

West Liberty

**Occupation:**

Wife/

mother/

grandmother/

farm hand/

staff accountant

**Previous service:** Church

treasurer for 18 years, member

of Stewardship Ministry

**Family information:** Husband

— Steve; four adult daughters;

one granddaughter

**Goals:** To share my gifts in

making decisions regarding

Ohio Conference's resources

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Traveling to visit my family,

lawn care, walking my dog,

reading ■



## ABOUT PEOPLE

### AMBS

*In their final year of study, Master of Arts in Christian Formation students at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) complete a final project — a ministry program for spiritual formation to be implemented in a specific setting. Recently, AMBS asked four students to share about their projects and how AMBS has prepared them for ministry. Miriam Zehr's reflection on her project appears here. To read all four students' stories, see <http://bit.ly/AMBSChristianFormation>.*

Miriam Zehr is associate pastor of worship and education at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio, which is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year over three weekends — one focusing on history, one on music and one on homecoming/reunions. Her project is to plan three worship services: one was a kick-off for the year in January, and the other two will be for the historical focus weekend in April.

She describes her project as follows:

“Worship planning is one of the favorite parts of my job. I also have interest in doing more collaborative worship planning and wanted to experiment with this project. A group of four is working with me. Since we are celebrating our 200th anniversary, I thought this would be a natural fit.

“I hope that in reflecting on the past and the legacy that has been left for us, we can be grateful for the ways God has been faithful to this church community and for the ways Oak Grove has impacted people's lives within the family of faith, the local community and the wider church. I also hope the congregation will be challenged to consider what legacy we want to leave for future generations. For example, on Jan. 14 we invited worship participants to hang leaves on a ‘legacy tree’; on one side they



Miriam Zehr

were to write a spiritual legacy they had received, and on the other, a legacy they hoped to leave.

“My AMBS degree has been in process many years; the positive side of that is that I have taken courses while working as a pastor and could integrate my learnings. I have found the courses on spiritual formation and worship very inspiring and helpful.” ■

### Bluffton University

BLUFFTON, Ohio — Bluffton University has announced the dean's list for the fall term.

Students with a GPA of 3.6 or higher are eligible for the dean's list. Five students from Ohio Conference congregations were named to the dean's list: Blake Hershberger of Canton, Beech Mennonite; Michael Lehman of West Liberty, Bethel Mennonite; Jacob Regier of Urbana,

Oak Grove Mennonite (West Liberty); Michael Short of Archbold, Central Mennonite; and Colton Steiner of Kidron, Kidron Mennonite.

Students with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.75 based on 20 semester hours were named to the dean's list with distinction for continued high achievement. Seven students from Ohio Conference congregations were named to the dean's list with

distinction: Katelyn Amstutz of Kidron, Sonnenberg Mennonite; Emma Cobb of Archbold, Lockport Mennonite; Syd Cobb of Archbold, Lockport Mennonite; Shelby Miller of Archbold, West Clinton Mennonite; Emily Short of Archbold, West Clinton Mennonite; Ethan Zaerr of Archbold, Central Mennonite; and Rowena Zuercher of Apple Creek, Sonnenberg Mennonite. ■

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## Pastoral notes

Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford (left) led the installation ceremony for his fellow regional pastor, Cliff Brubaker, on Jan. 21, as Cliff joined the collaborative ministry team at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold. Cliff is continuing his regional pastor role on a half-time basis.



On Jan. 21 Cliff Brubaker was installed at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, as the fourth member of the congregation's

collaborative ministry team. Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford led the installation ceremony. Following the tradition at

Zion, Mike Zimmerman and Chris Liechty had a humorous skit, poking fun at Cliff's home state of Michigan.

Cliff's fellow collaborative ministry team members participated in the worship service. Corben Weaver Boshart preached the sermon, titled "Covenant and Commitment," based on Ezekiel 34. Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg and Sue Short served as worship leaders. The congregation celebrated with a potluck luncheon following the Sunday school hour.

Cliff is continuing his role with the Ohio Conference as regional pastor on a half-time basis. He is working with Zion Mennonite in a quarter-time position. ■

Ryan Sprunger was licensed for special ministry on Jan. 28 at Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron. Pictured left to right are Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford, Ryan Sprunger and Colleen Sprunger (holding Ryan and Colleen's son, Haydn.)



Ryan Sprunger was licensed for special ministries on Sunday, Jan. 28, at Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron. He is serving as a chaplain for firefighters/emergency medical technicians and the community. Ryan is also an elder at Salem Mennonite Church.

Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford led the licensing ceremony. Kevin Himes, pastor at Salem Mennonite Church, preached the morning message based on Titus 1:5-9, titled "What does a leader look like?" ■

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## ABOUT PEOPLE Continued from page 12

Tony Doerhmann was installed as a short-term transitional pastor at Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Michigan, on Sunday, March 4. Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker led the installation ceremony.

Until the end of 2017, Tony served as the pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Bellefontaine. He has roots in the northwest Ohio area, having grown up in the Zion Mennonite congregation and attending

Lockport Mennonite as an adult until he attended Hesston College's pastoral ministry program. He will commute to Salem Mennonite from Marysville, and he has committed to working with Salem Mennonite for three months, with a possible extension. ■

## Melvin D. Leidig

Melvin D. Leidig, 92, of Orrville, formerly of Canton, Ohio, died on March 19, 2018, in the Orrville Retirement Community after a period of declining health while under hospice care. He served as pastor of First Mennonite Church in Canton, and also served as interim pastor for numerous Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations.

Melvin was born on Aug. 3, 1925, in Pompeii, Michigan, to the late Rueben and Emily (Teuscher) Leidig. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Lois (Gisel); his daughter, Shari Leidig Holland (Scott) of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; sister Bernice of Harrisonburg, Virginia; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Debra Anne Leidig, in 2001, who was developmentally disabled; his parents Rueben and Emily; brothers, Clarence and Wilbur; and sisters, Hazel and Gladys.

Melvin was member of Orrville Mennonite Church. At the age of 13 he became a Christian and was greatly influenced by

the death of his Uncle Dan, who died as a conscientious objector in World War I. As a result, Melvin became a conscientious objector when he was of age. He graduated from Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute and was ordained in the Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference.

Melvin met his wife, Lois, while in Mennonite voluntary service in Saginaw, Michigan, where he started Grace Chapel Mennonite Church. He later attended Western Michigan University, where he received both a B.A. in social work and an M.A. in counseling.

Following his graduate work, he was called to First Mennonite Church in Canton, Ohio. There he helped start South East Community Organization (SECO) and was involved in many community organizing activities. He worked for a variety of social service organizations in Michigan and Ohio while pastoring. Mel had a pastoral heart and was gifted in helping congregations through transitions. He did many interim

pastorates throughout Stark County and Wayne County, Ohio, for both Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations. He was an ordained retired minister in the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

He was deeply involved in civil rights, peace and justice leadership while always keeping current on world events up to the time of his death. His family and friends will remember him as an advocate for others and especially committed to racial and economic justice.

A funeral service was held on Friday, March 23, at Orrville Mennonite Church with Pastor Bill Seymour officiating. A time for friends and family to call was held at Short Funeral Home, Archbold, on Saturday, March 24. Burial was in the Pettisville Cemetery.

Memorial donations can be made to Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron PA 17501 or to Orrville Mennonite Church, 1305 West Market St, Orrville OH 44667. ■

## Conference Calendar

### APR

- 6-8 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 13-14 Mother-Daughter Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 14 Growing Young Seminar with Duffy Robbins, Kidron Mennonite Church
- 21 Healthy Boundaries Training, Shalom Counseling and Mediation Center, Archbold
- 27-28 Father-Son Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### MAY

- 4 *Laughter is Sacred Space*, John Legend Theater, Springfield

### OCT

- 26-27 Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat, Bellville

### NOV

- 2-4 Pastors' Wives Retreat, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin

Young Adults; Theology and Women's Narrative; Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence; Ethics and Practice of Forgiveness; and more. You can take up to two courses, and your first class is 50 percent off. See [ambs.edu/academics/one-course-options](http://ambs.edu/academics/one-course-options) for details.

**Camp Luz has a trio of retreats coming up in April.** For more information, visit

[www.camluz.com](http://www.camluz.com).

- April 6-8 — Men's Retreat with Moses Ru-mano
- April 13-14 — Mother-Daughter Retreat with Julie Longacre
- April 27-28 — Father-Son Retreat with Jim and Isaac Bartholomew

**Graduate Students in Healthcare Professions:** Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) offers educational grants for Anabaptist students to learn and serve in cross-cultural mission/service settings in developing countries. The application deadline for the 2018-19 academic year is May 15, 2018. For details and application form, see <http://mennohealth.org/SET/>, email [info@mennohealth.org](mailto:info@mennohealth.org) or call 1-888-406-3643. ■

## Back page briefings...

**The MC USA Executive Board has announced that Glen Guyton will serve as the new executive director of Mennonite Church USA.** He will begin a three-year term on May 1, 2018. To learn more, see <http://bit.ly/MCUSAGlenGuyton>.

**Terry Shue has announced his resignation from his position as**

**Mennonite Church USA director of leadership development.** His end date will be no later than June 1, 2018. See the complete news release at <http://bit.ly/TerryShueMCUSA>.

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