

# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

SEPT/OCT 2018



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## Dick Barrett hired as conference minister

**The Ohio Conference Leadership Team has hired Dick Barrett of West Liberty to serve as conference minister of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA.**

Dick comes to the conference minister position after serving Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty, Ohio, for 16 years, the first four as associate pastor and the last 12 as lead pastor.

After being raised Roman Catholic, Dick joined the New York State Police in 1981. As a young adult Dick strayed from the faith. After a

failed marriage and the sudden death of his father, he asked for a Bible for a Christmas present. It was in reading the Word of God that he came to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ as both his Savior and Lord. He was baptized at Clarence Center – Akron Mennonite Church in Akron, New York. As he continued his journey of discipleship, especially being challenged by Jesus' teaching on nonviolence and nonresistance found in the Sermon on the Mount, he sensed God's calling on his life away from serving as a police officer and towards pastoral ministry.



Dick Barrett

Because of his own personal experience of having been received graciously by a Mennonite church, which accepted him where he was at in his Christian journey and yet challenged him to grow in his

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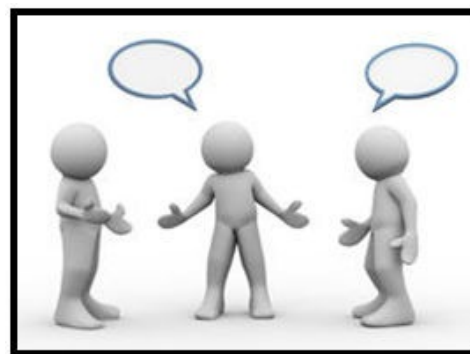
## Workshop to promote healthy conversations

**In a world that seems increasingly polarized, how can we promote healthy conversations?**

Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron is hosting a Healthy Conversations Workshop Nov. 9-10. Jes Stoltzfus Buller, the peace education coordinator for Mennonite Central Commit-

tee, will be the facilitator for this free workshop, and all are invited to attend.

Many people today bemoan the difficulty of conversing with people of differing viewpoints. All too often



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**VOL. LXXII, NO. 5**

**SEPT/OCT 2018**

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 e-mail: [ohioevangel@gmail.com](mailto: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.

Send subscription information and address changes to the editor at [ohioevangel@gmail.com](mailto:ohioevangel@gmail.com).

**EDITORIAL**

## Why are change and letting go so hard?

This past summer my Sunday school class spent time studying the book of Ecclesiastes. While I would not recommend Ecclesiastes to someone looking for a quick mood boost, there is plenty of food for thought in this book of the Bible.

As we studied this book, one common phrase appeared again and again in the New International Version of the Bible (NIV): “This too is meaningless.” It seems that no matter what the writer focuses on — hard work, building, wisdom, pleasure, advance-

ment — it never satisfies for long.

In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, Douglas B. Miller notes that the word translated as “meaningless” in the NIV (*hebel*) also can be translated as “vapor.” While there are many opinions about what the word is meant to convey, I eventually came to think of it as “ephemeral” or “not long-lasting.”

I admit that I would like to be involved in things that will last. But does everything we do as churches need to go on for decades

to make them worthwhile? If a ministry or program only lasts for a short while, was it really “meaningless”? I don’t think so.

Chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes begins with the words, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.” Can we accept that as seasons of life pass, we may need to change as well, not only as individuals, but as congregations?

— ahl

## Credentialing Ministry takes action in sexual misconduct case

On Aug. 28, 2017, the Credentialing Ministry Team immediately suspended the credentials of Ned Wyse, and following an investigation of sexual misconduct charges, suspended them for one year. The Credentialing Ministry Team followed the Mennonite

Church USA Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure, adopted by the Ohio Conference Leadership Team.

Sanctions and conditions were laid out to remove the suspension. Unfortunately, Ned is not suffi-

ciently compliant with those sanctions and conditions, and effective Aug. 28, 2018, his credentials are terminated as prescribed in the Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure. ■

### Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Moderator: Bob Sauder — [sauderbob2@gmail.com](mailto:sauderbob2@gmail.com)  
Assistant Moderator: Thomas Dunn — [thomas@crownhillmennonite.com](mailto:thomas@crownhillmennonite.com)  
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Gifts Discernment Ministry Chair: Mel Hathaway — [smcpastor@embarqmail.com](mailto:smcpastor@embarqmail.com)  
Stewardship Ministry Co-Chair: Melanie Miller — [mgfmiller@gmail.com](mailto:mgfmiller@gmail.com)  
Regional Pastor: Ralph Reinford — [ralphreinford@gmail.com](mailto:ralphreinford@gmail.com)  
Regional Pastor: Cliff Brubaker — [cliffbru7@gmail.com](mailto:cliffbru7@gmail.com)  
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# Conference minister

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discipleship, he has a very deep appreciation for the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith.

Dick has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany and a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, New York, as well as graduate course work from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He has participated in the two-year LifeSpring School of Spiritual Formation supported by Ohio Conference and has completed spiritual direction training at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. Dick has also completed several different trainings through the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center in Lombard, Illinois, and a two-year Pastors of Excellence program at Ashland Theological Seminary. He is just finishing a two-year training program in Christian Transformational Leadership at The Transforming Center outside of Chicago.

In his 16 years at Oak Grove Dick has greatly appreciated the support given to both him and the congregation from Ohio Conference. This includes Conference's assistance with his original calling and placement at Oak Grove, several pastoral transitions during his years serving at Oak Grove, support from regional pastors and pastor peer groups, and the "Gathered and Sent" initiative that Ohio Conference has been engaged in the past several years.

While the past five to seven years have been difficult on the Conference, especially with conflict in the bigger church, resulting in several churches leaving the Conference, Dick sees God's hand at work in the Conference and is hopeful as we continue with the "Gathered and Sent" initiative and move into the future.

Dick will begin full time on Jan. 1, 2019, hopefully being able to give one to two days a week over the next four months as he transitions from his role as lead pastor of Oak Grove to conference minister.

His priorities in the beginning months include trying to visit all the congregations in the Conference, building relationships with the pastors and other leaders, and reexamining the Conference's current vision and structure, trying to make it sustainable, both financially and in

the workload of its staff. After meeting recently with both the Leadership Team and the Ministry Development Team, it appears that he will be bringing some leadership to the "Gathered" part of the "Gathered and Sent" initiative.

Dick and his wife, Mary, who just celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, reside in West Liberty. They have two sons who live outside of Buffalo, New York, and two daughters and three grandchildren who live near West Liberty. Besides spending time with his family, Dick enjoys reading, golfing and serving on the West Liberty Fire Department.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

You may contact Dick Barrett by email at [ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com](mailto:ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com) or by phone at 937-935-2549. ■

*"Dick sees God's hand at work in the Conference and is hopeful as we continue with the 'Gathered and Sent' initiative and move into the future."*

## Podcast features conversation with Dick Barrett

**Want to learn more about Dick Barrett, Ohio Conference's new conference minister? The Sept. 5 episode of the Ohio Conference Cast, Ohio Conference's podcast series, features a conversation with Dick Barrett.**

In this 20-minute episode hosts Thomas Dunn and Bill Seymour talk with Dick about his back-

ground, his journey to becoming an Anabaptist, and his hopes for the Ohio Conference in the coming years. The episode is on the Conference website: <http://bit.ly/OHConfCastDickBarrett>. You can find all Ohio Conference cast episodes on iTunes (search for "Ohio Conference Cast") or on the Conference website: <https://ohiomennoniteconference.org/podcasts>. ■

*Grant projects to support community outreach, education, workshops*

## Conference awards seven grants

**The Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team (MDT) has awarded seven grants totaling \$21,860. The MDT approved these grants at its Aug. 23 meeting. Funding for these grants comes from surplus funds that had accumulated during years in which the Conference ended its fiscal year with a surplus.**

Grants will provide funding toward the following projects:



**The Server** — Crown Hill Mennonite Church is working with an ecumenical group of churches to open a café in Rittman called the Server. The emphasis of the café will be to provide a ministry of presence, providing a space in town where people of all ages can feel safe hanging out and strengthening relationships. Snacks will be available, and patrons will have access to wi-fi.

**Mennonite & Brethren Marriage Encounter** — Open Arms Hispanic Ministry is partnering with several congregations (Salem Mennonite in Wooster, Orrville Mennonite, and Martins Mennonite) to hold a Marriage Encounter weekend

at the Comfort Inn in Millersburg. The weekend presentation will be for both English and Spanish speakers.

**Tedrow Homework Table** — Tedrow Mennonite Church is providing a homework table

program for youngsters in the Tedrow area. Volunteers work with the students on Tuesdays after school. Grant funds will help with costs of the program, as well as a fall field trip.



**Enhancing and Equipping for Worship Workshop** — Central Mennonite Church is hosting a worship workshop, Enhancing and Equipping for Worship, on Oct. 5-6. The workshop is being planned with support from the

*Enhancing & Equipping  
for  
Worship*



Northwest Ohio (Lockport, Zion, Good Shepherd, West Clinton, Pine Grove, Tedrow, Salem (Mich.), Toledo, and Inlet). Area churches of other denominations are also involved, as well as Fairlawn Haven and First Mennon-

ite Church in Bluffton. Rachel Miller Jacobs will be the featured speaker, and a variety of workshops will be offered.

**Doxology Coffee Shop** —

LifeBridge Community Church in Dover is opening the Doxology Coffee Shop in the church's foyer. The goal of the coffee shop is to provide a healthy place that is alcohol-free for people to meet and connect.



**Healthy Congregations**

**Workshop** — Berlin Mennonite Church will host a Healthy Congregations Workshop led by staff from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. The workshop will be scheduled for sometime during spring or summer 2019.

**Community Shared Work Space** — Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty is planning to offer shared work spaces at the church's downtown community center, the Grove. These shared work spaces will be for small business owners, freelancers and independent contractors needing an office space during the week or a place to meet with clients. The hope is to increase community connections in West Liberty. ■



# Healthy conversations

Continued from page 1



Jes Stoltzfus Buller

conversations can become combative, and rather than extending intellectual hospitality, we engage ideas different from our own on a theological and ideological battleground.

Healthy conversations are possible, however, and this hands-on workshop will focus on practices which support healthy conversation, including active listening, centered speaking, and healthy process in talking about difficult issues.

There is no charge for this workshop, but participants are asked to RSVP by **Oct. 31** to Sonnenberg Mennonite Church by email at [sonnenbergmc@embarqmail.com](mailto:sonnenbergmc@embarqmail.com) or by phone at 330-857-8222.

The workshop will begin Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. For more details and a full schedule, please see <http://bit.ly/2018HealthyConversation> s. ■

## RESOURCE CORNER

## Videos offer tips for leading adult Bible studies

Central Plains Mennonite Conference has produced a series of short videos with tips for leading adult Bible study groups. The series, titled “Open the Book,” features presenter Keith Slater, who has worked for SIL International and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. He is a member of West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell, Iowa.

The title of each video in the series refers to a phrase from Nehemiah 8, in which Ezra read the Book of the Law to the Israelites as they returned from exile.

In addition to a very brief introductory video, the series includes three videos:

- “Don’t Mourn or Weep: Goals and Problems”
- “Listen Closely: Facilitating Good Discussion”
- “A Unified Purpose: Preparing to Lead”

All three videos are less than 30

minutes long. You can find links to them at [www.centralplainsmc.org/bible-study-videos](http://www.centralplainsmc.org/bible-study-videos).

Many other resources for leading adult Bible studies are available at <http://www.anabaptistfaithformation.org/adults.html>. ■

## Missional training focuses on growing leaders, communities

In August and September, Ohio Conference Missional Consultant Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg led several missional training events focusing on developing leadership and growing missional communities.

In the quest for developing leaders, she emphasized the need to look for people who are teachable and available, and the need to focus on the gifts of the people who are being called, rather than pushing them to fill roles in programs which our congregations have already developed.

Although Jessica is moving to



Excelsior Springs, Missouri, she has been working to train others to continue missional training in the Conference. ■

# Event offers resources for new pastors

Pastors new to the Ohio Conference had a chance to visit the Ohio Conference office in Kidron as part of the New Pastor Orientation.



**By Ralph Reinford**  
Regional Pastor

Fourteen members of Ohio Conference gathered for a New Pastor Orientation on Aug. 12 and 13, beginning Sunday evening and continuing all day on Monday. The gathering provided a time for new pastors to learn about resources and ask questions about the Ohio Conference.

Sunday evening was a time for sharing finger foods and popcorn along with introductions and going over the schedule for Monday.

On Monday, the group traveled together by van and visited the Heini's Cheese Chalet in Bunker Hill and got to see how cheese was made and taste at least 30 varieties. We also toured Behalt (which means "to keep, hold, or remember") at

the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center in Berlin and viewed the 265-foot mural depicting the witness of the Amish, Mennonites, and Hutterites. We learned how Behalt is a great teaching tool for our baptism classes.

We also had some Amish food at Mrs. Yoder's in Mt. Hope, and then returned to Kidron and the Ohio Conference Office to meet Judy King, Ohio Conference administrative secretary, who gave a brief introduction to her office.

Bob Sauder, conference moderator, gave an overview of the Ohio Conference vision and structure. We entertained questions and outlined the upcoming retreats, workshops and other offerings of Conference.

All the pastors were around the first-year mark of

their assignments, so we tried to answer questions they now have after some experience. Of course, there were conversations along the way about credentialing, baptism and closed versus open communion.

We had a tour of MCC Connections, given by the director, Michael Amstutz. Besides the store and rug making, he shared about health kits and school kits. He invited the pastors to have their congregations partner in meeting needs by putting kits together, purchasing batting for quilts, or providing household and clothing needs for people in their congregations.

We briefly talked about other places in the Kidron area that are church-related, such as Everence, Central Christian School, and Camp Luz.

It seemed to be a meaningful evening and day with the opportunity to get acquainted with others in similar ministry.

Those who attended included Matthew Peterson (Midway), Matt Reed (Beech), Jamie and Kelly Rye (Millersburg), Sue and Stan Short (Zion), Ryan Sprunger (Salem-Kidron), Verle and Maralee Brubaker (Maple Grove, Hartville), Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker and Marilyn Brubaker, Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford, and Ohio Conference Moderator Bob Sauder and Pam Sauder. Thanks go to staff members Judy King and Alysa Short for help with the planning of this event. ■

# Central Produce Table encourages sharing, raises funds for local food pantry



Members of Central Mennonite Church in Archbold are encouraged to share the bounty from their gardens at the Central Produce Table. Any monetary donations benefit the local food pantry. Photo by Alysa Short.

There are few things better than the taste of a home-grown tomato. But sometimes home gardeners can be overwhelmed with an overabundance of tomatoes, or zucchini, or beans. What to do then?

At Central Mennonite Church in Archbold, the answer is simple. Church members have a standing invitation to share the bounty from their gardens each week at the Central Produce Table. Anyone who has more produce than they need is invited to bring what they have grown, and everyone in the congregation is invited to take what they would like.

Monetary donations are accepted, although they are definitely not required. All funds raised benefit the Archbold Fish Pantry, the local food pantry. Usually, several hundred dollars are

raised over the course of a season.

Laura Nafziger has been responsible for organizing the Central Produce Table since its beginning, about seven or eight years ago when Jeff Smith and Wanda Stopher were serving as pastors at Central Mennonite. As she recalls, the idea for the produce table came in connection with a sermon series. The idea was to encourage people to share what they had and to also be willing to receive from others.

The idea to donate funds came later, after some people expressed interest in contributing even if they did not have gardens.

Since its inception, the produce table has flourished each year, with donations usually beginning

at the end of July and continuing until the frost curtails gardening for the season. As one might expect, the types of produce vary from week to week. “I never know what’s coming,” Nafziger said, noting that in addition to produce, often there are also eggs donated from someone who raises chicken.

Many people at Central know and appreciate fresh produce, and some older people who used to garden but don’t do so any more enjoy the opportunity to have home-grown vegetables, she said.

After members take home the items they want, any produce left over is delivered to either the Archbold Fish Pantry or to one of several missions in Toledo, Nafziger said. ■

***“The idea was to encourage people to share what they had and to also be willing to receive from others.”***



## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Pastoral notes

Alvis Pettker (center) was installed as pastor of Friendship Mennonite Church in Bedford Heights on Sunday, Sept. 9. Also pictured are Ruth Pettker and Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford.



Alvis and Ruth Pettker were received as members at Friendship Mennonite Church in Bedford Heights on Sunday, Sept. 9, after reading a letter of transfer from North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren Church in Winni-

peg, Manitoba, Canada, and sharing their testimonies.

Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford brought the message during the worship service. He also licensed Alvis for Christian min-

istry and installed him as pastor of the Friendship congregation. Ralph Reinford also gave a prayer of blessing. A cookie reception followed the service in the foyer.

Alvis and Ruth grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and they have lived most recently in Waterloo, Ontario. Alvis earned a master of theological studies degree in applied ministry from Conrad Grebel University in 2015, and a bachelor of arts degree in Bible studies and theology from Canadian Mennonite University in 2010. He previously served as interim pastor at Valleyview Mennonite Church, and as a youth worker at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario. ■

Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford returned to work Aug. 1 after a three-month leave during May, June and July. The Ohio Conference Leadership Team arranged for this leave in recognition of Ralph's picking up many of the conference minister's duties

during the past year in addition to his regional pastor work.

During his leave, in addition to reading and resting, Ralph spent time helping his son to build a house and making improvements at home. He also was able to visit his daughter and

son-in-law in Botswana, including an overnight stay at a rhino reserve and a visit to a crocodile farm. Ralph has expressed his appreciation for this time away, and he noted, "I am excited about what God is doing in Ohio Conference." ■

Regina Wenger has concluded her work as a pastoral team member at Central Mennonite Church in Archbold. She is now a student in a doctoral program

at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

The Central Mennonite congregation held a program of fare-

well for Regina on Sunday, Aug. 5. Following the program, the congregation had a fellowship meal. ■

Jessica Schrock-Ringenberg has concluded her work as a member of the collaborative ministry team at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold. Her final worship service with the congregation was on Aug. 26. She

and her family are moving to Excelsior Springs, Missouri. Since October 2017 Jessica has volunteered her time to serve as a missional consultant for the Ohio Conference, and has led numerous missional training

sessions. She plans to continue meeting with the Ohio Conference Missional Task Force and the Ohio Conference cohort of Missional Discipleship Initiative led by Marvin Lorenzana. ■

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## ABOUT PEOPLE Continued from page 8

Myron Weaver has concluded his work as lead pastor of Berlin Mennonite Church, and has become director at Orrvilla Retirement Community. The congregation held a farewell

service for him on Sunday, Aug. 19. The service included a litany reflecting on Myron's influence in the congregation and the conference. Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford attended the

service and took part in the litany. The congregation had a card shower for Myron and his wife, Sheryl, and gave them a quilt. ■

# Conference deficit increases during August

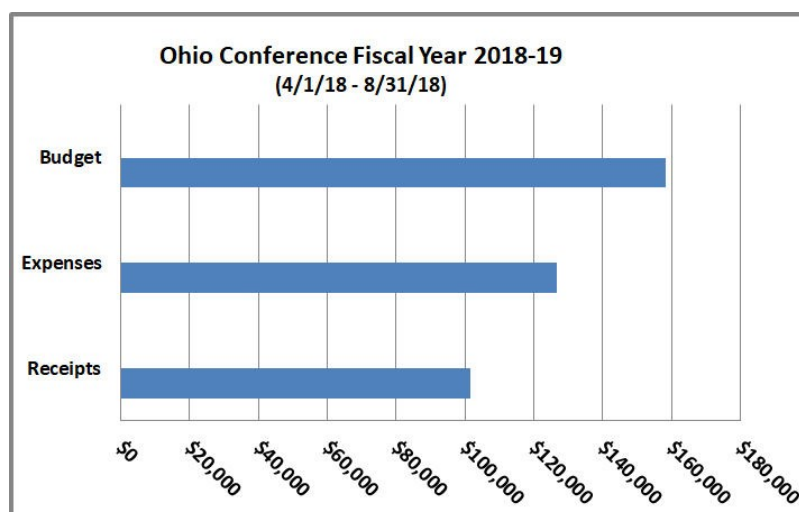
Ohio Conference's financial deficit increased during August, according to figures provided by Financial Coordinator Stan Helmuth.

Total receipts for the month were \$19,524, including \$18,515 in giving from congregations. Expenses for the month totaled \$24,772, resulting in an operating balance of -\$5,248 for the month. That shortfall added to the year-to-date deficit. At the end of August the operating balance was -\$25,305.

Despite the current deficit, it

should be noted that expenses for the year so far have been below the amount budgeted for in the 2018-19 Conference spending plan. Expenses for the first five months of the fiscal

year totaled just \$126,856, compared to the budgeted amount of \$158,396. The Conference fiscal year ends March 31, 2019. ■



## Stronger financial support needed to meet budget

A reminder from the Stewardship Ministry Team:

At our Annual Conference Assembly in March, delegates strongly affirmed the 2018-2019 budget. This budget allows us

to hire a full-time conference minister.

Currently, our congregational support is not adequate to support our budget for 2018-2019.

Please consider increased support of our Conference needs, both as a congregation and as individuals. Your prayer and financial support will be sufficient! Thank you. ■

## Conference Calendar

### SEPT

- 23 Meetings with Glen Guyton, MC USA Executive Director, Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City
- 28-30 Marriage Encounter, Comfort Suites Hotel & Conference Center, Berlin

### OCT

- 2 Fall Cluster Meeting for Delegates, South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty
- 4 Fall Cluster Meeting for Delegates, Toledo Mennonite Church
- 5-6 Enhancing and Equipping for Worship Workshop, Central Mennonite Church, Archbold
- 7 World Communion Sunday Worship Service, Central Christian School, Kidron
- 16 Fall Cluster Meeting for Delegates, Wooster Mennonite Church
- 26-27 Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat, Quality Inn & Suites, Bellville

### NOV

- 2-4 Pastors' Wives Retreat, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin
- 6 Fall Cluster Meeting for Delegates, Summit Mennonite Church, Barberton
- 8 Pastors' Meeting, Upper Sandusky Library
- 9-10 Healthy Conversations Workshop, Sonnenberg Mennonite, Kidron
- 9-11 Women's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### FEB

- 1-3 Youth Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 15-17 Junior High Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### MAR

- 7-8 Missional Conference, Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron
- 8-9 Annual Conference Assembly, Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron

abaptist values and theology with skills in preaching, leadership, teaching, and congregational care. M.Div. degree (or equivalent) and pastoral experience preferred. For more information, contact [searchcommittee@ma.legrovemennonite.org](mailto:searchcommittee@ma.legrovemennonite.org).

**Mennonite Disaster Service is seeking weekly volunteers for October, November and December 2018.** Join us as individuals or groups to help those affected by disasters. We are working in the following locations: Lake County, California; Pine Ridge, South Dakota; Victoria County, Texas; La Grange, Texas; Fort Myers, Florida; West Virginia; Williams Lake, British Columbia; and Puerto Rico.

Serve with a positive and Christ-like heart using your trade skills or learning new skills on the job. To serve with us, contact Deanna Frey by calling 1-800-241-8111 or emailing [dfrey@mds.mennonite.net](mailto:dfrey@mds.mennonite.net). For more information about our current projects, visit [mds.mennonite.net](http://mds.mennonite.net). ■

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For more Ohio Conference news, visit the Ohio Conference website:

[ohiomennoniteconference.org](http://ohiomennoniteconference.org)

## Back page briefings...

**Maple Grove Mennonite Church**, a congregation of about 116 members in

Hartville, Ohio, seeks a full-time lead pastor with a strong commitment to An-