

# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

NOV/DEC 2018



ohiomennoniteconference.org

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Editorial
- Advent worship guide
- 3 MyNeighbor program
- 4 Conference Minister musings
- 6 Worship workshop  
ACA prayer requests
- 7 Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat  
Dove's Nest
- 8 About people
- 10 Back page briefings

*What does it mean when we say, 'Jesus is our center'?*

## Building relationships, discerning together

**What does it mean when we say, "Jesus is our Center"? Thirty-six credentialed leaders from across the Ohio Conference came together to discuss that question on Thursday, Nov. 9, at the All-Ohio Conference Pastors' Meeting.**

The pastors and other credentialed leaders met for a day of discussion and rela-



Credentialed leaders from across Ohio Conference met in Upper Sandusky on Nov. 9. Photo by Dick Barrett.

Continued on page 3

## Bluffton students 'reimagine' the Church

**By Tricia Bell  
Bluffton University**

BLUFFTON, Ohio – Using the theme "Reimagining the Church: Looking Back to Move Forward" as inspiration, Bluffton University students explored the relevance of the Church in the modern era during Spiritual Life Week. The week-long, student-led examination of faith is held each semester on Bluffton's campus.

For Jenny Dorsey, a Bible and theology major from Hilliard, Ohio, and chair of the Spiritu-

al Life Week Committee, the topic is of vital importance.

"I have been truly inspired by this week," said Dorsey. "Something that everyone that I've talked to has noticed is that the Church is something that a lot of young people are no longer going towards. So, we're looking at how we turn the Church into something that not only young people are drawn to but also gives life to the community."

Leading the conversation was Hannah Troyer, a 24-year-old  
Continued on page 5



Hannah Troyer speaks to Bluffton University students during Spiritual Life Week. Photo by Emily Griffioen.



**VOL. LXXII, NO. 6**  
**NOV/DEC 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

# Are you ready to listen and learn?

Bill Seymour and Thomas Dunn, co-hosts of the Ohio Conference Cast podcast series, like to joke that they only have about a dozen people listening to their podcasts. According to our analytics, the number is quite a bit larger than that, although it varies from episode to episode.

One recent podcast that has stuck in my mind featured a conversation with Gerald Hildebrand of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who serves the Mennonite

World Conference as a regional representative for North America. In that podcast, Hildebrand emphasized North American Mennonites' need to learn from other Anabaptists from the rest of the world: "We have an incomplete understanding, by ourselves, of what it means to be a devoted follower of Jesus. We need the help — we desperately need the help — of our global sisters and brothers to come alongside us and to enlight-

en us with what they're about and what they're discovering in their discipleship so that we can learn from one another and then together be the body of Christ."

Are you ready to listen and learn from others? You can find Ohio Conference Cast podcasts on iTunes or on the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/OhioConferenceCast>.

— ahl

# Advent worship guide is for families



Anabaptist Faith Formation Network and Mennonite

Church USA are offering a free, downloadable guide for family worship during Advent written by Elsie Rempel and illustrated by Megan Kamei.

This resource, titled *God's Goodness*, is designed for parents to use at home with their children. For use between Dec. 2 and Jan. 6, the worship guide includes Bible readings, short litanies, songs, hands-on activi-

ties and questions to ponder together. The guide follows the texts and themes of the worship materials found in the magazine *Leader*. To download a copy, go to <http://bit.ly/2018AdventResource>.

This Advent worship guide is just one of many resources available at no cost from [www.AnabaptistFaithFormation.org](http://www.AnabaptistFaithFormation.org). ■

## 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)  
Credentialing Ministry Chair: Andy Stoner — [rpandy@juno.com](mailto:rpandy@juno.com)  
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)  
Conference Minister: Dick Barrett — [ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com](mailto:ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com)  
Regional Pastor: Ralph Reinford — [ralphreinford@gmail.com](mailto:ralphreinford@gmail.com)  
Regional Pastor: Cliff Brubaker — [cliffbru7@gmail.com](mailto:cliffbru7@gmail.com)  
Administrative Secretary: Judy King — [ohmc@zoominternet.net](mailto:ohmc@zoominternet.net)  
Finance Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — [cboh1@zoominternet.net](mailto:cboh1@zoominternet.net)  
Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — [ohioevangel@gmail.com](mailto:ohioevangel@gmail.com)  
Coordinator of Volunteers: Alysia Short — [alysashort@gmail.com](mailto:alysashort@gmail.com)

# Building relationships

Continued from page 1

relationship-building at the Upper Sandusky Library in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

Since 2015, Ohio Conference leadership has hosted several of these gatherings for credentialed leaders, and over time, the sense of connection among participants has grown. Reflecting on the day, Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford said, “I think we’re quite comfortable with each other, a lot more so than we were in the past. I think we are starting to build some cohesiveness.”

The agenda for the day included a devotional time based on Ephesians 4:1-16 led by Conference Minister Dick Barrett, who encouraged the credentialed leaders to consider what it means to grow up and be mature in Christ.

Conference Minister Dick Barrett also shared his hopes and dreams for the Conference, and the pastors also had a chance to share their hopes and dreams.

A major portion of the discussion time focused on the question of what it means when we say, “Jesus is our center.” Participants discussed in smaller groups, and then as an entire



group. The group worked at identifying important beliefs and the practices which result from these beliefs.

The day’s events also included a time for recording a podcast for the Ohio Conference Cast podcast series. Co-hosts Bill Seymour and Thomas Dunn interviewed Conference Minister Dick Barrett and Paula Snyder Belousek, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, about their experience at the October meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council. Pastors were able to ask questions

about CLC as part of the podcast. To hear this podcast, go to <http://bit.ly/OhioConferenceCast>.

To see more photos from the day, go to <http://bit.ly/NovPastorsMeeting>. Photos are by Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford and Conference Minister Dick Barrett. Reflecting on the day’s events, Ralph Reinford said, “The gathering wasn’t as serious as the pictures appear. There was some lightheartedness and laughter.” ■

Paula Snyder Belousek (center) ponders how to answer a question during a recording session for the Ohio Conference Cast. The podcast episode was recorded during the All-Ohio Conference Pastors’ Meeting Nov. 9. Also pictured are Conference Minister Dick Barrett (left) and Ohio Conference Cast co-host Bill Seymour.

## MyNeighbor program can benefit Ohio Conference

Do you have a credit card through Everence? If so, your purchases can benefit the Ohio Conference.

Everence donates 1.5 percent of the transaction total of each

purchase made with a MyNeighbor credit card to the charitable organization of your choice. Donations are distributed each January and are based on the card holder’s choice of

“neighbor” as of Dec. 31. In January 2018, the Conference received \$385.48 from this program. See <https://www.everence.com/myneighbor> for details about the MyNeighbor program. ■

## CONFERENCE MINISTER MUSINGS

# Thankful and hopeful

By Dick Barrett  
Conference Minister

**I have now completed two months as Conference Minister, working one to two days a week until beginning full-time on Jan. 1. I have participated in the four cluster meetings across the Conference, the congregational leadership team retreat in Bellville, the Mennonite Church USA Constituency Leaders Council meeting in Chicago, a day-long pastors and credentialed ministers gathering and several other Conference and congregational events across the Conference. I am very hopeful by what I have observed.**

We have come through some difficult times as a Conference, with a lot of conflict and dissension where we have seen several congregations leave to affiliate with other Anabaptist or Mennonite denominations. Most of our congregations are smaller in size today than they were just a few years ago. We find ourselves in a culture that is highly suspicious of the organized church, often for good reasons. We have not always looked like or acted like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But God is present, and God works not only in those times when things seem to be going well. God is also present and

working in the midst of conflict and struggle. In fact, that is where God does some of his best work. God often has to do pruning to allow things to become healthier. Bigger is not always better. The changes that have taken place over the past several years have caused us to examine our identity as an Anabaptist people, to focus on those things that are most important to our faith, and to explore what it means to be missional in our own settings.

We have rallied around the “Gathered and Sent” initiative, reminding us that we are both a called people, called to be a community of brothers and sisters in Christ, and a sent people, sent to go out and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in words and actions in our own communities and around the world. What was most exciting about attending the four cluster meetings across the Conference was hearing the many different stories from all the congregations on how they are living out their lives as a people dedicated to worship of, faith in, and witness for Jesus Christ. It was impossible to hear all the stories and not get excited about what God is doing in Ohio Conference and to be hopeful for what lies ahead.

Over the past two months I have met and observed the many different people across Conference who God has blessed us with, their many different gifts, and their passion



for wanting to be faithful to who God has called us to be as Anabaptist congregations working together. It is hard to see all the new people who have come into Conference over the past several years and not be hopeful.

Does this mean there won't be challenges ahead? No. Just as God has allowed us to work through our most recent challenges, he will lead us through more challenges to continually transform us into the people he wants us to be.

As we enter into this special time of year in which we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas, may we pause and be thankful for all the blessings God has given us as individuals, families, congregations and as a conference. May we be especially thankful for the gift that God has offered us and the world in his Son, Jesus Christ — his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection. May we be hopeful as we approach a new year that God will be able to bring to completion the good work that he has begun in us in Christ Jesus. ■

*“God is also present and working in the midst of conflict and struggle. In fact, that is where God does some of his best work.”*

# Reimagining the Church

Continued from page 1

community organizer and activist from Akron, Ohio, who is a member of Summit Mennonite Church in Barberton. She is currently engaged in the work of reimagining the Church. Troyer cofounded The Neighborhood in 2017 to address KKK recruiting activities in the Wayne and Holmes County, Ohio, communities, and served with the Innerbelt National Forest to bring diverse groups of people together following the failure of a controversial freeway construction and development project in her home community. During the week, she served as the speaker at Forum, Chapel and Sunday Night Worship and worked closely with members of the campus community.

Acknowledging that the world is hyper-politicized, with tensions and divisions between cultures and races seeming to grow wider every day, Troyer asked, “What are we to do as people who still believe and strive to live by the message and teaching of Jesus? Is the Church still the vehicle to proclaim Christ’s love to the world?”

Troyer’s answer: yes, but she also believes the Church needs some reimagining.

“I’m becoming more and more convinced that to be sustainable in doing justice work in the Church, we must learn our roots, which happen to be pretty unjust,” explained Troyer, who shared with students the horrific philosophical and legal framework that the United States of America was founded on through Papal Bulls from



Hannah Troyer (center) talks with Bluffton University students during Spiritual Life Week. Photo by Stephen “Tig” Intagliata, campus pastor.

Pope Nicholas V and the Doctrine of Discovery.

To grow in relevance for youth, Troyer believes the Church must be a place of healing, community, worship and outreach looking forward.

“I go to church on Sunday, I teach a Sunday school class. I’m on our church council. I’m engaged in the functions of my church conference. I’m not for throwing away what we’ve got now,” explained Troyer. “But I do propose we look at new models and examples. Models that include a community that is less segregated, more open-ended, more flexible, more accessible, that creates real change in our communities. Models that allow the Spirit to move and speak more freely.”

Troyer and the Spiritual Life Week Committee drew from Acts 2:46-47: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the peo-

ple. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Other events during the week included a racial reconciliation event co-sponsored by the Multicultural Student Organization, a movie night and a coffee house concert with Bluffton-area musicians. Juggler for Jesus David Cain, a Guinness World Record holder, who incorporates Bible verses and thoughts on Christianity into his juggling routine, also added a bit of levity to the work of the theme.

At the conclusion of the week, Emily Griffioen, a graphic design major from Belmond, Iowa, said she was inspired to act now, while she is still in college.

“Hannah showed us that you don’t need to feel qualified to do this work, you just need to start and follow through,” said Griffioen. “Spiritual Life Week was both inspiring and challenging and was a good balance between the two, looking at what we can do as the Church and also as people.” ■

*“I’m not for throwing away what we’ve got now. But I do propose we look at new models and examples. Models that include a community that is less segregated, more open-ended, more flexible, more accessible, that creates real change in our communities.”*

— Hannah Troyer

## Worship workshop comes to NW Ohio

Central Mennonite Church in Archbold hosted a worship workshop Oct. 5-6. Pictured at left is artwork from Visual Arts for Worship workshop. At right is speaker Rachel Miller Jacobs from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Photos by Alysa Short.



Central Mennonite Church in Archbold hosted the “Enhancing and Equipping for Worship” workshop Oct. 5-6. Rachel Miller Jacobs, associate professor of congregational formation at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, was the featured speaker.

About 30 people participated in this event, which included

break-out workshops on music, art in worship, and several other topics.

The event was planned with support from the Mennonite congregations in Northwest Ohio including Lockport, Zion, Good Shepherd, West Clinton, Pine Grove, Tedrow, Salem (Mich.), Toledo and Inlet. Area churches of other denominations were also involved, as well

as Fairlawn Haven and First Mennonite Church in Bluffton.

The Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team also supported this event with a ministry grant.

More photos from this event are posted on the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/2018WorshipWorkshopPhotos>. ■

## Assembly planners request prayer

Ohio Conference’s Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) planning team, along with its prayer coordinator, would like to encourage your congregation to be in prayer leading up to this year’s Missional Conference

and ACA on March 7-9, 2019. They are sending regular prayer updates to all Ohio Conference congregations. You also can find these prayer requests at <http://bit.ly/ACAPrayerRequests>. ■



# Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat examines attitudes and behaviors



Duane Beck led the Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat in Bellville, Ohio, Oct. 26-27. Eight congregations participated in the retreat. Photos by Ralph Reinford.

Forty-one people representing eight Ohio Conference congregations participated in the Pastor-Leadership Team Retreat held at the Quality Inn & Suites in Bellville Oct. 26-27.

Presenter Duane Beck led the event, focusing on the topic "Leadership Matters: Finding God in the Changes." He encouraged retreat participants to

consider attitudes and behaviors in their congregations.

For more photos from the retreat, see the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/Pastor-LeadershipTeamPhotos>. ■

## RESOURCE CORNER

# Dove's Nest offers sample protection policy

Does your church need a protection policy? If so, check out Dove's Nest's updated three-page model policy available as a PDF: <http://bit.ly/ProtectionPolicyModel>. You can also find more resources on the Dove's Nest website: <https://dovesnest.net/policies>.

You can use this model policy as a guide to create or update your own that works for your

church's context, settings, and values. The 2018 update includes the following additions:

- Guidelines for child-to-child and youth-to-youth contact
- Additional victim-centered steps, especially for situations when the victim and alleged offender are both in the church community

- Technology and social media concerns

- A best practices addendum

The model policy is a free resource, but please consider supporting Dove's Nest (<https://dovesnest.net/donate>) so that this organization can continue to make materials like this one available to all churches. ■

## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Pastoral notes

Matthew Williams was ordained Sept. 30 at South Union Mennonite Church. Pictured left to right are Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker, Matthew Williams (holding Thomas) and Katie Williams.



Matthew Williams, pastor of South Union Mennonite Church in West Liberty, was ordained for Christian ministry during the morning worship service on

Sunday, Sept. 30.

Matthew preached the sermon, which focused on having a pure heart, which he, in part, defined as having a single focus. In addition

to encouraging the congregation to build disciplines which were likely to lead to pure hearts, he invited the congregation to ask him from time to time how singular his focus was.

During the ordination, Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker noted that one of the questions Matthew would be asked is whether he could affirm his baptismal vows. Cliff noted that the words spoken to Jesus at his baptism could be his in a special way on this day of ordination: "You are a child of Mine, I love you, and I am well pleased with you." ■

Ryan Harker's installation service at West Clinton Mennonite Church included a time of prayer for Ryan. Pictured in front (left to right) are Charles Geiser, Brenna Harker, Ryan Harker, Janet Myers, and Cliff Brubaker. Behind them are Teresa Geiser, Paul Keim, Wes Graber, Jess Engle, and Gary Waidelich.



Ryan Harker was installed as associate pastor at West Clinton Mennonite Church in Wauseon on Sunday, Oct. 7.

Darrell Zook, pastor of Pulaski Mennonite Church in Pulaski, Iowa, was the special speaker for the morning. He and his wife, Pat, came from Iowa for this special installation service.

Ryan and his wife, Brenna, drove a considerable distance to be able to attend Pulaski Mennonite Church, the closest Anabaptist congregation, while they were students at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri.

Also present as a guest at the Oct. 7 installation service was Paul Keim, a professor from

Goshen College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Darrell used I Timothy 4:12-16 as the scriptural text for his sermon. He started his message by remembering his first visits with Ryan and Brenna, learning they were avid gardeners, even in their urban setting. He returned at the close of the message to the image of gardening and gave Ryan three pieces of counsel related to gardening in a pastoral sense:

- 1) Tend to the soil. Know that nurturing the health of the soil is more than pouring fertilizer on it in the spring, but takes steady care to build the soil over a long period.
- 2) Plant your garden close to the house. As compared

Continued on page 9

## ABOUT PEOPLE

Continued from page 8

with some who advise planting the garden far away from the house, plant it close, where you walk through, see it, weed it, love it. Stay close to the congregation.

- 3) Keep your garden small. Noticing the tempta-

tion of many gardeners to have a very large garden, Darrell noted that growing a smaller garden keeps one's focus in a way that one grows a better garden. Keep the focus of your ministry narrow to the things you do best, and

your ministry will bear its best fruits.

The service closed with communion being served by Ryan, Darrell, West Clinton Pastor Jess Engle, and Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker. ■

## Staff notes

Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker underwent open heart surgery Oct. 23 to replace his aortic valve.

The surgery went well, and Cliff was able to go home from the hospital on Sunday, Oct. 28. He is recovering at home, and re-

ports, "I am walking every day, and it goes better each day. It is considerably easier for me to walk now than prior to surgery."

Cliff also reports that at his first post-surgery doctor appointment, the surgeon was pleased

with how things are progressing. Cliff will be doing cardiac rehab three days a week, and he plans to resume his work for the Ohio Conference beginning in January. Please continue to keep Cliff in your prayers during this recovery period. ■

## Immigration Resource Team

Volunteers from around the Ohio Conference are serving on a newly formed Immigration Resource Team. The team's tasks are to develop a statement on immigration for delegate discussion at the 2019 An-

nual Conference Assembly and to develop a list of resources to help congregations be better informed about the topic of immigration. Team members include Mara Weaver Boshart, Zion Mennonite Church; Han-

nah Troyer, Summit Mennonite Church; Kelsey Troyer, Oak Grove Mennonite Church (Smithville); and Alicia Selig, Wooster Mennonite Church; Dan King, Ministry Development Team member; and Alys Short, staff member. ■

## Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Two members of Zion Mennonite Church have received scholarships to study at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

Sue Short of Archbold, a member of the collaborative ministry team at Zion Mennonite, is one of several AMBS students who have been awarded the Lederach Preaching Scholarship. This

scholarship is for students affiliated with Mennonite World Conference who sense a call to pastoral leadership and show promise in preaching. She is studying in the M.Div. program with a focus on pastoral ministry.

Mara Weaver Boshart of Archbold, also of Zion Mennonite,

has received the Next Generation Scholarship, a full-tuition scholarship intended to encourage and support outstanding Mennonite students with gifts in church leadership. She is studying in the M.Div. program with a focus on theological studies: history and ethics. ■

## Conference Calendar

### JAN

10 Ministry Development Team Meeting via GoToMeeting

### 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

### APR

5-7 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

12-13 Mother-Daughter Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

26-27 Father-Son Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

east Conference, and more at <http://mennoniteusa.org/healthy-structures>.

**You are invited to participate** in conversations happening across Mennonite Church USA now by using the *Pathways* study guide and submitting the Journey Forward Feedback Survey and story nominations by Dec. 31, 2018.

These resources are available in English and Spanish at <http://mennoniteusa.org/jf>.

**Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN)** is seeking an executive director (.75 FTE) who will promote the vision of ADN to Anabaptist congregations, organizations and individuals. This individual will personally represent ADN with donors and supporters, solicit gifts, and provide oversight to ADN staff and programs.

Fundraising and constituent cultivation ability are required. A heart for inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families in the life of the church is a must. ADN has a collaborative work environment with administrative support. To download a full job description, go to <http://bit.ly/ADNExecDirector>. ■

## Back page briefings...

**Do you know high-school students with gifts for leadership and ministry?** Through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Explore program, students in grades 10–12 can explore ministry and theology, grow in spiritual practices and listen for God's call through a summer congregational intern-

ship and a group experience (July 9-25, 2019). Scholarships are available. Apply for 2019! See [ambs.edu/explore](http://ambs.edu/explore) for details.

**Find updates from the recent Constituency Leaders Council meeting** about church vitality, a prayerful sending for South-

OHIO MENNONITE  
**EVANGEL**  
*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

For more Ohio Conference news, visit the Ohio Conference website:  
[ohiomennoniteconference.org](http://ohiomennoniteconference.org)