

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

JAN/FEB 2019



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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50th Annual Conference Assembly to include a time of celebration

Salem Mennonite in Kidron to host ACA

Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron will host the 2019 Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) of the Ohio Conference March 8-9. The theme of this year's gathering will be "From Jerusalem to Antioch: Legacy Churches Anchoring Missional Communities," based on Acts 11: 19-30.

Ohio Conference also will

hold a missional conference at Salem Mennonite in Kidron immediately prior to ACA, on March 7-8. See page 3 for more details about the missional conference.

Featured speakers during the worship services will be Sally Schreiner Youngquist, one of the founding pastors of Living Water Community Church in Chicago, Illinois; and Steve North, pastor of LifeLine Toledo, a church plant in Toledo, Ohio. They



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Journey transforms learners and leaders

**By Ben Parker Sutter and
Annette Brill Bergstresser**

ELKHART, Indiana (Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) — Dennis Miller of Goshen, Indiana, was in his late 50s when he realized it was time for him to explore other vocational possibilities.

"I've been in construction my entire working life," he said. "Working in the church is



Jacob Dodson, a mentor, and Jeremy Clevenger, a first-year participant, both of Wooster (Ohio) Mennonite Church, took part in the September 2018 Journey Weekend Learning Event at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Michigan. Photo by Jason Bryant.

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Failing vs. not trying

What stops us from taking bold steps when we are seeking to join God in mission? I would guess that many times we are reluctant to try things because we are afraid that they just won't work.

At a cluster meeting for delegates to Annual Conference Assembly, as Conference Minister Dick Barrett invited the delegates to talk about activity in their congregations, he encouraged everyone to not only

share their successes, but also things that did not work out. “We do want to know if you fail, because that’s part of the process,” he said. He noted that the congregation he pastored, Oak Grove in West Liberty, has experimented with numerous programs at its in-town ministry location, The Grove. Some of those ideas have worked, and some have not. But none of them would have worked if they hadn’t been tried.

I was reminded of a quote I saw recently, which has been attributed to hockey star Wayne Gretzky: "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." I admit that I am not a great risk taker. And yet, if we are waiting for the perfect opportunity that can't fail before we step out in mission, there is a good chance that we will never actually take that step. Is that really any better than trying and failing?

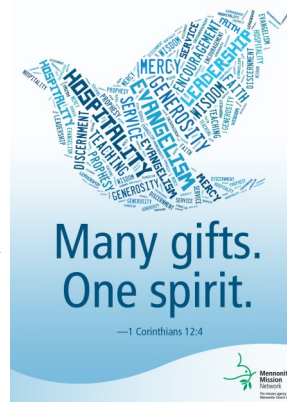
— ahl

MMN offers free Scripture graphics

Are you looking for Scripture-related art that you can use in your office, youth room or classroom? Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) offers a wide selection of Scripture graphics on its website which you can download

for free: <http://bit.ly/MMNScriptureGraphics>.

You can browse the entire collection or narrow your search by focusing on a specific book of the Bible. A sample graphic is pictured here.



Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Moderator: Bob Sauder — sauderbob2@gmail.com
Assistant Moderator: Thomas Dunn — thomas@crownhillmennonite.com
Credentialing Ministry Chair: Andy Stoner — astoner45@gmail.com
Gifts Discernment Ministry Chair: Mel Hathaway — smcpastor@embarqmail.com
Stewardship Ministry Co-Chair: Melanie Miller — mgmiller@gmail.com
Conference Minister: Dick Barrett — ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com
Regional Pastor: Ralph Reinford — ralphreinford@gmail.com
Regional Pastor: Cliff Brubaker — cliffbru7@gmail.com
Administrative Secretary: Judy King — qhmc@zoominternet.net
Finance Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — cboh1@zoominternet.net
Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@gmail.com
Coordinator of Volunteers: Alysa Short — alysashort@gmail.com

also will be the presenters at the missional conference preceding ACA.

The 2019 Annual Conference Assembly is the 50th Assembly for the Ohio Conference. In his letter to delegates, Ohio Conference Moderator Bob Sauder noted, “We are designating this year as a year of celebration! We are celebrating 50 years of service as the Ohio Conference, the hiring of a new conference minister, and the introduction of a new executive director of Mennonite Church USA.”

On Friday evening the Conference will hold a special reception for new Conference Minister Dick Barrett and for Glen Guyton, the new executive di-

rector of Mennonite Church USA. The reception will take place at 9 p.m., following the evening worship service, which will be held at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron. Registration for ACA will begin Friday, March 8, at 12:30 p.m.

The first business session for delegates will begin at 1:30 p.m. ACA will conclude at 4 p.m. on Saturday after the final business session.

In addition to business sessions and worship services, ACA will include special times for prayer, workshops, and displays from church-related agencies.

The registration fee for ACA is



Sally Schreiner
Youngquist



Steve North

\$45 per person if received by **Feb. 15**, and \$60 per person after that date. There is an additional charge for meals.

Registration forms and more information about ACA are available on the Ohio Conference website:

www.ohiomennoniteconference.org. To register online, go to <http://bit.ly/2019ACA>. ■

“We are celebrating 50 years of service as the Ohio Conference, the hiring of a new conference minister, and the introduction of a new executive director of Mennonite Church USA.” — Bob Sauder, moderator

Missional conference to explore the role of established congregations

Ohio Conference will hold a missional conference March 7-8 at Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron, immediately prior to the 2019 Annual Conference Assembly. The theme of the missional conference will be “From Jerusalem to Antioch: Legacy Churches Anchoring Missional Communities,” based on Acts 11:19-30.

Presenters will be Sally Schreiner Youngquist, one of the founding pastors of Living Water Community Church in Chicago, Illinois; and Steve North, pastor of LifeLine Toledo, a church plant in Toledo,

Ohio.

Registration is due by Feb. 15. To register online, go to [http://](http://bit.ly/2019MissionalConference)

bit.ly/2019MissionalConference. For more details, see the [conference brochure](#). ■

How can we support missional communities?

What does the story of mission going out from Jerusalem as described in Acts 11 mean for churches in Ohio Conference? Perhaps, we, like the church in Jerusalem, can be anchors for mission. We have many years of walking together as congregations as well as many gifts and resources from God. Might we be called to anchor new church plants and missional communities? How can we share the best of our heritage and remain open to the renewal of the Holy Spirit?

A new chapter of ministry begins

By Dick Barrett
Conference Minister

On Dec. 31 I completed my time as one of the pastors of Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty (four years as associate pastor and 12 years as lead pastor). There was much sadness and grief on my part in the ending. On Jan. 2 I began full-time as conference minister for the Ohio Conference. There is much excitement and anticipation in the beginning.

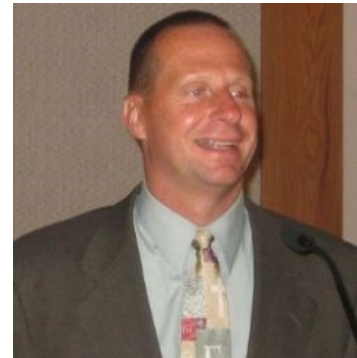
"I am excited about getting around to the many different churches throughout the Conference, worshiping and meeting with the pastors, leaders and congregants."

The first couple of weeks have been Spirit filled. The two regional pastors, Ralph Reinford and Cliff Brubaker, and I met for half a day to envision what our roles will look like moving into the new year. Cliff just returned from medical leave after open heart surgery, and Ralph has begun serving Conference half time, down from full time.

On Sunday, Jan. 6, I had the privilege to speak and worship at Crown Hill Mennonite Church with five churches (Crown Hill, Wooster, Orrville, Salem-Wooster, and Martins), a collaboration that the churches have been participating in at different times through different activities over the past couple of years. It was a wonderful time of sharing, worship and fellowship with a great meal following.

On Jan. 8 I had the opportunity to sit in on my first Credentialing Ministry Team meeting as they interviewed one pastor who is transferring into Conference to serve at one of our congregations and two who were approved for licensing toward ordination. What amazed me was the diversity of the individuals, both in their callings to ministry and their life experiences, as well as their anticipation and excitement for serving God in the context of Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA. It was impossible to sit in on those interviews and not be excited about our future together.

It seems like I have started at the Conference's busiest time of the year. We are gearing up for Annual Conference Assembly on March 8-9 at Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron. This year we will be celebrating Ohio Conference's 50th anniversary. Prior to the annual assembly, on Thursday evening, March 7, and Friday morning, March 8, we will once again be hosting a missional seminar. The title of this year's seminar is "From Jerusalem to Antioch: Legacy Churches Anchoring Missional Communities." The two guest speakers are Sally Schreiner Youngquist, a community leader from Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Illinois, and Rev. Steve North, who is a community ministry leader in the inner city of Toledo. I want to encourage both church lead-



ers, as well as members and attendees, especially those who are community and missionally minded, to attend.

Finally, I am excited about getting around to the many different churches throughout the Conference, worshiping and meeting with the pastors, leaders and congregants. I am accepting invitations for the beginning of February and beyond. Please feel free to email me or call me with possible dates.

May God continue to bless us as a Conference as we journey forward, discerning together what it means to be Anabaptist/Mennonite churches in our current cultural contexts where we have been placed. May Jesus continue to be the center of who we are and all that we do.

If you would like to invite Conference Minister Dick Barrett to visit your congregation, you may email him at ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com, or call him at 937-935-2549. ■

Salem congregation moves into new building



The Salem Mennonite Church congregation in Waldron, Michigan, held the first worship service in its new building on Sunday, Dec. 9, 2018.

Two and a half years after breaking ground for a new church building, the Salem Mennonite Church congregation in Waldron, Michigan, has begun worshipping in its new facility.

The first worship service in the new building took place on Sunday, Dec. 9. On that day, the congregation met in the lobby of the old church building and marched out together, singing “You shall go out with joy.” It was noted that in the Bible

“shall” is not a suggestion, but rather a mandate.

Ohio Conference Moderator Bob Sauder, a member of Salem Mennonite, noted that while it took two and a half years to go from groundbreaking to move-in, members of the congregation began dreaming about constructing a new facility more than 20 years ago. He said that up to this point, the congregation has kept borrowing for the construction project to a minimum.

A grant from the Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team helped to fund the construction of a coffee bar area in the lobby of the new building. The cabinets in the coffee bar area were made from pine trees that were cut from the church property in order to access the site.

While the congregation has begun worshipping in the new building, some parts of the project remain unfinished. Work still is needed on several areas, such as the kitchen, carport, parking areas and landscaping. ■

Everence program benefits Ohio Conference

In January the Ohio Conference received a check for \$747.24 from Everence Federal Credit Union as part of its MyNeighbor credit card program.

With the MyNeighbor program, individuals and businesses generate reward dollars for their

favorite nonprofits every time they use their MyNeighbor credit cards from Everence.

Everence donates 1.5 percent of each purchase to the card user’s chosen nonprofit agency. Each January Everence writes and sends checks to the select-

ed charities. Thanks to all who have designated the Ohio Conference as their “neighbor” in this program. To learn more about the MyNeighbor program, see the Everence website: <http://bit.ly/MyNeighbor2019>. ■

Journey

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**“Journey pairs
online
instruction
with an
ongoing
mentoring
relationship in
which
participants
discuss their
learnings and
reflect on
their
leadership
skills.”**

something I always thought about but at the same time didn't think was a realistic option for me.”

Miller, who attends Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, took a leap of faith and enrolled in **Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program**, a distance-friendly undergraduate-level nondegree program designed to serve as a starting place for Anabaptist pastoral and theological education for Christian leaders. Several persons from the Ohio Conference are now participating in this program.

Offered by the Church Leadership Center of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Indiana, in cooperation with two conferences of Mennonite Church USA — Central District and Indiana-Michigan — Journey pairs online instruction with an ongoing mentoring relationship in which participants discuss their learnings and reflect on their leadership skills. Participants complete introductory studies in Bible, missional leadership, Anabaptist history and theology, pastoral care, preaching and worship planning while also deepening their practice of spiritual disciplines.

The program has given Miller, now in his third year, an opportunity to explore a nudge toward pastoral ministry while continuing to work in his concrete business.

“I am a different person than I was two years ago,” he said.

“My interests and priorities have changed. Journey is shaping me into something different, and I can only describe that as, God is working in my life.”

A NEW DESIGN

The Journey curriculum, which was also used for the seminary's former Pastoral Studies Distance Education program, was recently redesigned to be more flexible and accessible by David B. Miller, D.Min., teaching associate of the Church Leadership Center. It now consists of online classes that incorporate video lectures, assigned readings, brief written essays, and opportunities for participants to interact with each other and their pastoral guides — pastors Donna Mast of Goshen, Indiana, and Duane Beck of Raleigh, North Carolina — through discussion boards and occasional videoconferences.

“[The video lectures] were filled with new ways of looking at things I thought I had known,” said Jan Croyle, a second-year participant from First Mennonite Church of Wadsworth, Ohio. “I found it interesting and helpful to read the other participants' essays. It seemed we either had a lot in common or else touched on totally different ideas.”

Journey participants meet with a local pastoral mentor every two weeks and gather for face-to-face Weekend Learning Events with other participants and mentors once or twice a year. Upon fulfilling the pro-

gram requirements — which can take two and a half to three years — participants receive a certificate of completion. Forty-one people have completed the program since it began in 2003.

Journey is now open to anyone in the world, noted Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, dean of Lifelong Learning at AMBS. When the program began, it was jointly owned by AMBS, Central District and Indiana-Michigan Mennonite conferences, and participants came primarily from these conferences.

“Last year, ownership and administrative oversight of the program were transferred to AMBS, with Central District and Indiana-Michigan signing on as the first ‘sponsoring conferences,’” she said. “This change opened up the possibility for participants from any conference or denomination to attend, and for any conference to become a sponsoring conference.”

This year's 17 participants — 11 men and 6 women — come from five conferences affiliated with Mennonite Church USA (Central District, Illinois, Indiana-Michigan, Ohio, Pacific Southwest); one regional church affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada); and one district of the Missionary Church (North Central). Two participants also identify as Lutheran and Pentecostal.

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Journey

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Central District Conference Minister Doug Luginbill (at right) leads a session on developing self-awareness through personality inventories at the September 2018 Journey Weekend Learning Event at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Michigan. Listening are (left to right) Robert Hunt, a second-year Journey participant from Dawning of a New Day in Elkhart, Indiana; Gloria Hernandez Bucher, a mentor, and JP Schumacher, a second-year participant, both from First Mennonite Church of Bluffton, Ohio; Jan Croyle, a second-year participant from First Mennonite Church of Wadsworth, Ohio; Rebecca Riek, a second-year participant from First Mennonite Church of Kitchener, Ontario; and Marilyn Rossiter, a mentor from Summit Mennonite Church in Barberton, Ohio. Photo by Credit: Jason Bryant.

MENTORING AS ACCOMPANIMENT

According to Gingerich Longenecker, the mentoring component of the Journey program plays a significant role in its success.

“Our goal for the mentoring relationships is that participants will experience spiritual and theological reflection on leadership, guidance in wise practice of leadership skills, and a biblical vision of effective leadership for a changing world,” she said.

Keith Kingsley of Fellowship of Hope in Elkhart, Indiana, who has mentored three Journey participants, sees Journey as helping encourage and empower people with ministry gifts who might not otherwise find their way into church ministry.

“More than ‘teacher’ or

‘supervisor,’ I see my role as that of ‘accompanier’ — a privileged position allowing me to experience the work of God in another’s life and surroundings,” he noted. “Insofar as I can be transparent with my mentees, I believe they also experience the benefit of perceiving some of God’s work in my life. There is a mutuality here that graces our journey together.”

‘YOU’RE AMONG FRIENDS’

Journey’s Weekend Learning Events — typically held in September and February at or near AMBS — offer a setting for mentors, mentees, conference leaders, AMBS faculty members and other instructors to gather in person for worship, prayer, learning, fellowship and mutual support.

At the September 2018 event at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Michigan, Miller told those attending, “All you first-time people here, I just want you to know: you’re among friends. These weekends are special, and you’ll never forget them.”

Gingerich Longenecker also spoke of feeling buoyed by the gathering, which brought together people from many different backgrounds. This year’s participants’ home countries include Belize, Bhutan, Congo, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan, as well as Canada and the United States. In addition to ministry, their vocations include counseling, insurance sales, health care and personal support, social work, education, piano teaching, administrative

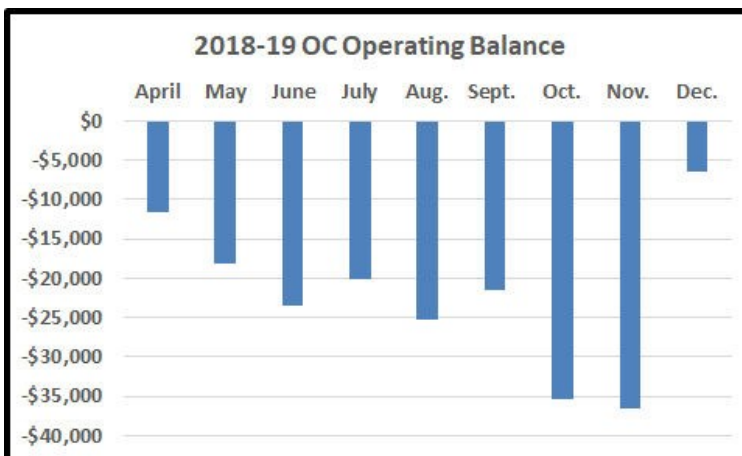
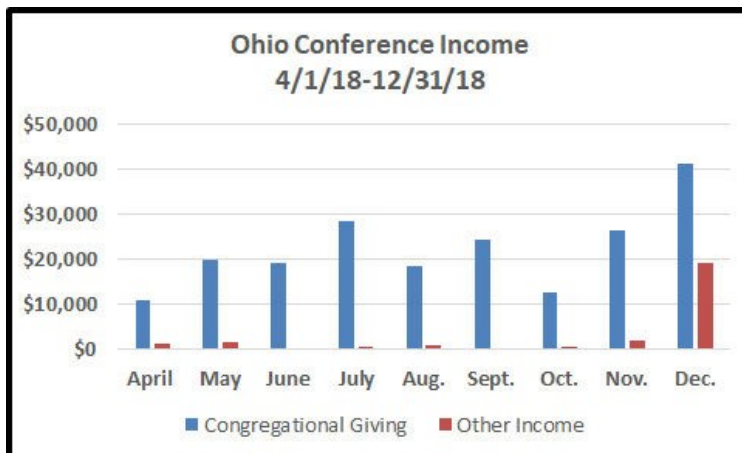
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Giving increases during December

Giving to Ohio Conference increased greatly during December, according to figures provided by Financial Coordinator Stan Helmuth. In fact, the amount received in December was more than double the amount received in any other month of the current fiscal year.

Receipts for December totaled \$60,171. Of that amount, \$41,174 came from congregational giving. During December giving from individuals was also very strong. In response to a year-end appeal from Conference Moderator Bob Sauder, individuals gave a total of \$15,133.

Expenses for the month totaled just \$30,041, resulting in a surplus of \$30,130 for the month. As a result, the Conference operating balance was -\$6,446 at the end of December, a great improvement from the balance at the end of November, -\$36,576. Thank you to all who contributed! The Conference fiscal year ends March 31, 2019.



Journey

Continued from page 7

support, solar installation, and construction.

"It was truly a feast of delights to experience rich worship, testimonials, learning sessions and meals with such a remarkable cross-section of the church in the U.S. and Canada," she said.

Participants continue to emphasize how important Journey is to them.

"It is so awesome to know there are still people who care to work with you and to talk to you," said Claude Flowers, a first-year participant from Family Mennonite Church in Los Angeles, California, during a time of reflection and worship

at the September gathering. "The awesomeness is so powerful, I don't have words to say; all I can say is thank you."

Tonya Gates, a third-year participant from Church Without Walls in Elkhart, Indiana, agreed: "The Journey program is helping me transform myself into who God wants me to be."

ABOUT PEOPLE

Pastoral notes

Andy Stoner was installed as transitional pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty on Sunday, Jan. 6, during the morning worship service. Regional Pastor Cliff Brubaker led the installation ceremony, which included a time of laying hands on Andy while praying for him and the congregation.

Andy preached the morning message, titled “Andy’s Ministry Pilgrimage,” referencing Jesus’ words in Luke 4. He shared his call into ministry and talked about some of his ministry ex-

periences, including his experience as a pastor of a congregation which was adjusting to the departure of its previous long-term pastor. He promised to pray for the congregation and asked them to pray for him.

A former regional pastor for the Ohio Conference, Andy has pastored several congregations and has worked as a counselor. He is a current member of the Ohio Conference Leadership Team and chairs the Credentialing Ministry Team. He and his wife, Anita, live in Springfield, Ohio.



Andy is serving as transitional pastor at Oak Grove following the departure of former Lead Pastor Dick Barrett, who is now the conference minister for the Ohio Conference. The congregation plans to have Andy serve as transitional pastor for up to 18 months. ■

Dan Hooley was installed as interim pastor of LifeBridge Community Church in Dover on Sunday, Jan. 13, during the morning worship service. Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford led the installation ceremony and introduced Dan to the congregation, since Jan. 13 was Dan’s first Sunday at LifeBridge. Ralph led in a prayer of blessing for Dan, and he was joined by the congregation with a laying on of hands.

Sheldon Stutzman served as worship leader during the worship service. Dan preached the morning message, “Why Choose to Follow Jesus,” based on 1 Corinthians 3:11 and Matthew 11:25-30. A fellowship meal followed the worship service.

Dan served previously as pastor of First Mennonite Church in Canton and most recently as



interim pastor of Friendship Mennonite Church in Bedford Heights. ■

Bluffton University

BLUFFTON, Ohio — Spiritual writer Christiana Peterson, a member of Midway Mennonite Church, spoke to Bluffton University students on Jan. 15 during the Student Life Forum. She talked on the topic “Searching for Koinonia: In Community with Mystics and Misfits.”

A blogger and author, Peterson shared her experience of living in a Mennonite intentional com-

munity and being drawn to mystics such as St. Francis, Dorothy Day and Clare of Assisi. Peterson has a master’s degree in theology and a Ph.D. in creative writing from St. Andrews University in Scotland.

She is the author of *Mystics and Misfits: Meeting God Through St. Francis and Other Unlikely Saints*. Her writing has appeared in



Christianity Today, *Art House America*, and *Christian Century*. ■

Conference Calendar

JAN

- 29 Winter Cluster Meeting, Central Mennonite Church, Archbold
- 31 Winter Cluster Meeting, Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman

FEB

- 1-3 Youth Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 12 All-Ohio Conference Credentialed Ministers' Meeting, Upper Sandusky Library
- 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
- 30 *Boots, Buckets and Barrows*, a Ted & Co. performance/fundraiser for Mennonite Disaster Service, South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty

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

NOV

- 15-17 Pastor-Spouse Retreat, Mills Park Hotel, Yellow Springs, Ohio

Feb. 6, 2019. Visit convention.mennoniteusa.org/registration now to find rates, forms and additional information. Menno-Con 19 will take place July 2-6, 2019, at the Kansas City (Missouri) Convention Center.

Calling everyone ages

15-22: Are you looking for a fun and meaningful way to serve this summer? There are spots left to join a 2019 Youth Venture team! See and join in the work God is doing in Indonesia, Peru, Japan, or Benin. Visit www.MennoniteMission.net/SERVE to learn more, or contact Lauren Eash Hershberger at LaurenEH@MennoniteMission.net.

Graduate Students in Healthcare Professions:

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) offers educational grants for Anabaptist students to learn and serve in cross-cultural mission or service settings in developing countries. Deadline for the 2019-20 academic year is May 15, 2019. For details and application form, see www.mennohealth.org/student_term, email info@mennohealth.org, or call 1-888-406-3643. ■

Back page briefings...

A new feature article from the Mennonite Church USA News Service looks at the recent history of the Ohio Conference and explores the renewed sense of hopefulness

in the Conference. You can find this article at <http://bit.ly/OhioConferenceHopefulness>.

Early registration for MennoCon 19 opens on

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