



# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

MARCH/APRIL 2020



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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*‘Hearts of Wisdom’ is theme of 2020 Annual Conference Assembly*

## Delegates gather for business, worship

**One hundred seventy-three people gathered at Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City on March 7 for the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference Assembly (ACA) of the Ohio Conference. Delegates from 36 congregations participated in the one-day meeting.**

### DELEGATES WORSHIP

In addition to business sessions, the one-day event included a time of worship, focusing on the theme



Prior to the sermon at ACA, Conference Minister Dick Barrett (left) prays with speakers David Hargrave (center) and Joel Miller, pastors at Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster.

“Hearts of Wisdom,” based on Psalm 90:12: “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Speakers during the worship service were the pastors of

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## Missional festival is for people of all ages

**You’ve probably heard the word “missional” many times before. But what does it really mean? And how can you live missionally?**

You can explore the answers to these questions at Engaging Mission 2020, an Ohio Conference missional festival planned for June 26-28 at

Bluffton University. This will be a bilingual event in both English and Spanish.

Engaging Mission 2020 is an event for people of all ages, including family groups. The festival will provide an introduction to missional living where participants will be challenged to



create space for mission in their lives. This event will include food, music, workshops, and worship.

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## Ohio Conference shares recommendations regarding the coronavirus

In an effort to be cautious but not overanxious regarding the spread of the coronavirus, Ohio Conference offers the following recommendations for our congregations to follow at the present time:

- Limit the practices that could spread germs, such as the shaking of hands and hugs.
- Make hand sanitizer and/or wipes readily available, and encourage their use.
- Communion and other activities should be adapted (perhaps even postponed or cancelled) to ensure health and safety.
- Encourage those who are sick to stay home.
- Encourage those who might be considered high risk (the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) to consider staying home.
- Follow the recommendations that are being recommended by the authorities in your particular area.
- Review the Mennonite Church USA statement titled "Mennonite Church USA shares resources for managing coronavirus" at <http://bit.ly/MCUSAManagingCoronavirus>. ■

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Editor: Ann H. Leaman

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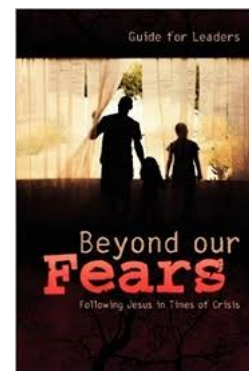
### RESOURCE CORNER

## MennoMedia offers free resources for calming fears

In light of the alarming coronavirus headlines, MennoMedia is providing free resources to help calm the fears of congregations. *Beyond Our Fears: Following Jesus in Times of Crisis* was originally created after the SARS outbreak of 2009, but the content is just as rele-

vant today. To download this material, go to <http://bit.ly/BeyondOurFears>.

For children, MennoMedia is offering *Don't Be Afraid: Stories of Christians in Times of Trouble*. Download it from <https://bit.ly/2vrWurT>. ■



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

Moderator: Lynn Miller — [lynnjaymiller@gmail.com](mailto:lynnjaymiller@gmail.com)  
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Coordinator of Volunteers: Alys Short — [alysashort@gmail.com](mailto:alysashort@gmail.com)

# Annual Conference Assembly

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Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster, David Hargrave and Joel Miller.

## MC USA MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

During the business sessions, Conference Minister Dick Barrett reported to delegates about the Mennonite Church USA Membership Guidelines. Recently an advisory group put together a report about the current state of the membership guidelines and gave recommendations. Dick Barrett said that Ohio Conference pastors discussed this report at their Feb. 11 gathering, and the Conference has received feedback from pastors about the recommendations.

He noted that the recommendation of the advisory group is a non-binding recommendation. Members of the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) will offer input on the recommendation at their spring meeting.



Ohio Conference representatives to the CLC include Dick Barrett, Moderator Lynn Miller and Assistant Moderator Paula Snyder Belousek.

Input from the CLC will be taken back to the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. It is possible that the Executive Board will propose a resolution for presentation at the next Mennonite Church USA Assembly in the summer of 2021. However, we do not know what that resolution will contain. We hope to have about a year to discern about any proposed resolution, he said. To learn more about the advisory group's recommendation, see <http://bit.ly/MCUSAMembershipGuidelines>.

## QUESTIONS TO CONTEMPLATE

Dick Barrett also reported about some of the things happening across the Conference. He talked about the "Gathered" initiative, which has focused on the support of pastors, and he mentioned the focus on spiritual direction and church planting.

As part of his remarks, Dick Barrett also asked the delegates to consider several questions:

- What are you doing in your community that is missional?
- If your church wasn't there, would it be missed by your community?
- What is your congregation doing to raise up leaders?
- How can we as Ohio Conference help you do that?

## SPENDING PLAN APPROVED

Delegates unanimously approved a spending plan for the 2020-21 fiscal year. The plan calls for spending totaling \$381,200. While introducing the spending plan, Stewardship Ministry Chair Dean Falb noted that the Conference has not had to transfer any money from capital funds during the 2019-20 fiscal year, even though such transfers were proposed in the spending plan. A copy of the 2020-21 spending plan is posted on the "Assembly Documents"

ACA photos: At left, Jamie Rye, pastor of Millersburg Mennonite Church, sings during an open mic session during a business meeting. At right, the Ignite Singers from Sharon Mennonite Church lead singing during the morning worship service. To see more photos from ACA, go to <http://bit.ly/ACAvideophotos>.

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# Annual Conference Assembly

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ACA photos: At left, delegates participated in communion at the end of ACA. At right, Coordinator of Volunteers Alysa Short talks about the work of the Immigration Resource Team. To see more photos from ACA, go to <http://bit.ly/ACAvideophotos>.



page of the Ohio Conference website: <http://bit.ly/ACADocuments>.

One difference between the current spending plan and the plan for 2020-21 is that funding for Open Arms Hispanic Ministries and Brazo en Brazo is directly included in the 2020-21 spending plan. During the current fiscal year, the Conference support for these ministries came from capital fund accounts.

## IMMIGRATION TEAM UPDATE

Coordinator of Volunteers Alysa Short presented a brief update about the work of the Immigration Resource Team. At the 2019 Annual Conference Assembly, delegates affirmed a resolution on immigration which called for individuals to become better informed about the issues surrounding immigration, as well as encouraging steps for congregations to take regarding this issue.

Recently, the Immigration Resource Team surveyed Ohio

Conference congregations to learn what steps they have taken to follow through on this resolution. Delegates received a written report from the resource team outlining some of the information revealed by the survey, as well as a list of additional immigration-related resources. (To see the team's report and links to other immigration resources, go to <https://ohiomennoniteconference.org/resources/immigration>.)

Alysa Short also noted that the Immigration Resource Team is seeking additional members, especially someone from the western part of Ohio. If you are interested in joining this team, please contact her at [alsyashort@gmail.com](mailto:alsyashort@gmail.com).

## RELEASE OF CONGREGATIONS

Conference Minister Dick Barrett prayed a prayer of blessing on several congregations which have closed or chosen to leave the Ohio Conference. During the past year, both Pine Grove Mennonite Church in Stryker and Emmanuel Mennonite

Church in Monclova have closed. Pike Mennonite Church in Elida has chosen to leave the Ohio Conference and join the Conservative Mennonite Conference. Prior to the prayer, Darwin Hartman, pastor of Pike Mennonite Church, addressed the delegates, expressing thanks for the help the congregation has received from the Ohio Conference during difficult times and appreciation for the leadership of Conference Minister Dick Barrett.

In other business, the delegates:

- Approved the minutes of the 2019 ACA;
- Were introduced to pastors with new assignments in the Ohio Conference;
- Affirmed the personnel slate presented by the Gifts Discernment Ministry (see pages 11-13 for more information about these volunteers);
- Heard a brief overview of what is happening in Mennonite Church USA from Sue Park-Hur, denominational minister for transformative peacemaking;

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# Pastors participate in leadership program

Four pastors of Ohio Conference congregations recently participated in the Values-Based Leadership Program at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania. The program includes two four-day sessions, one in October and one in February.

“This is an excellent program that we encourage other pastors to participate in,” said Paula Snyder Belousek, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida.

The Values-Based Leadership Program is designed for participants to gain a fresh perspective



on leadership, one that is in tune with their faith and core values and considers their personal style and strengths. It is not only for pastors, but also

for leaders in business, nonprofit organizations, and education. Learn more about this program at <http://www.vblp.org>. ■

Pastors from Ohio Conference congregations who participated in the Values-Based Leadership Program at Laurelville include (left to right) Paula Snyder Belousek of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, Kevin Himes of Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron, and Jeff Hochstetler of Berlin Mennonite Church. Not pictured is a fourth pastor who participated in this training, David Elkins of Central Mennonite Church in Archbold.

# Sonnenberg Maple Syrup Festival to support missions

Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron will hold its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Maple Syrup Festival including a pancake and sausage breakfast on Saturday, March 28, from 7 to 10:30 a.m.

This annual event features locally-made maple syrup, and proceeds support missions, both local and international. For more details, please see the event flier at <http://bit.ly/SonnenbergMapleSyrupFestival>. ■



# Annual Conference Assembly

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— Heard a report from Corben Weaver Boshart of the Missional Planning Team, describing Ohio Conference involvement in the Missional Discipleship Initiative and the Sent Network, which is working to equip church planters;

— Heard from Pastors Thomas Dunn and Bill Seymour about

the developing relationship between several Ohio Conference congregations in Wayne County and the Akron Swahili Community Church, which is primarily comprised of Congolese refugees;

— Heard from Jennifer Hartzler about the upcoming missional conference, Engaging

Mission 2020, which will take place June 24-26 at Bluffton University (see the article on page 1 for more details);

— Heard a report from Karen Horsman of Mennonite Mission Network;

— Celebrated communion. ■

CONFERENCE MINISTER MUSINGS

# Seeking

By Dick Barrett  
Conference Minister

**Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. — Matthew 6:33 (NIV)**

**I recently spent a week alone with God. I try to do that a couple of times a year. I have learned to go into the week without my own expectations of how God might speak to me, whether through my Bible reading, other reading, prayer and/or interactions in the location I find myself in.**

In years past I have taken many books with me only to return with them unopened because that is not where I found myself being led. This year I only took a couple. One of them was a book written by Tim Lehman, a former mentor of mine who served as both a congregational and transitional pastor in Ohio Conference for many years. It is titled *All Authority Has Been Given to Me: Hearing and Seeing Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew*. I found the book very challenging. What does it really mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness? Tim spends almost the first half of the book looking at Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5-7), especially

his *Beatitudes* (Matthew 5:3-12), as he claims they lay the foundation for all that follows. Jesus follows his *Beatitudes* with the rest of the *Sermon on the Mount* in which he describes what God's *Righteousness*, living out God's Kingdom here on earth, should look like. Jesus teaches that God's *Righteousness* exceeds the Law.

I was particularly drawn to the difference between God's *Righteousness* and our human need to be right. I need to confess that I am a "lawman" to the core. Twenty years of growing up in a home where right and wrong was emphasized, followed by 20 years working in law enforcement cemented that in my core. That makes me ask the questions: 1) Why in those first 40 years of my life did I not find Jesus; and 2) Was I seeking a wrong righteousness?

It seems to me that God's Kingdom and God's righteousness can only be found through seeking God. Moses sought God with all that he had, and because of that seeking, he was rewarded. Moses enjoyed an intimacy with God unlike anyone else on earth prior to Jesus' coming. It was Moses whom God revealed his name to (Exodus 3:14). It was Moses to whom God revealed his law. It was Moses to whom God declared his true nature: "*merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy and faithfulness*" (Exodus 34:6).



It was Moses to whom God revealed as much of himself as he could at that time in history (Exodus 33:21-23.). It was Moses to whom God revealed the promise of an even greater glory to come: "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you*" (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Jesus is the prophet who allows us to see God in a way that Moses couldn't even see God. "*No one has ever seen God but the one and only Son, who is himself God and has made himself known*" (John 1:18). "*The Son is the image of the invisible God*" (Colossians 1:15). But like Moses we can only see God when we continue to seek God, in our time through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I write this at the beginning of Lent, the season of the Christian year in which we are supposed to spend time seeking God at a greater level. It is also

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"I was particularly drawn to the difference between God's Righteousness and our human need to be right."



# Musings

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a time in which we are to reflect on our human shortcomings, darkness and sin. Michael Ford writes in his book, *Eternal Seasons*, “Lent is the spiritual season which calls for greater openness to the Word of God and conversion in every area of our lives. It is a time to face the darkness within and expose it to the light. Lent is the season to confront our demons and expel them.” This is the season in which I need to not worry about the small things I need to let go of, like chocolate or ice cream (which I have never been too successful at letting go of

anyway), but to focus on the things that I need to expel from my life that are preventing me from seeking God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. The turning point in Jesus’ ministry here on earth came when he turned toward Jerusalem and set his sights on Calvary. In Matthew’s gospel it comes in chapter sixteen, “*Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it’*” (Matthew 16:24-25).

Tim Lehman writes in his book *All Authority Has Been Given to Me*, “All people are responsible to how receptive or unreceptive they are to Jesus’ teaching and his invitation to follow him. We all have choices to make about the extent to which we believe what he has taught as the authority over our lives. Each and every person must decide if Jesus is Lord and teacher of their life here and now, and whether they will be a part of God’s kingdom come to earth by obeying Jesus.”

“*Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” ■

**“All people are responsible to how receptive or unreceptive they are to Jesus’ teaching and his invitation to follow him.”**

— **Tim Lehman**

# Engaging Mission 2020

Continued from page 1

Featured input speakers will be Seth and Theresa Crissman of Virginia Mennonite Missions. In addition, there will be topic discussions: “Stories of Immigration” with Haroldo Nunes and family, “Missional Discipleship” with Marvin Lorenzana,

and “Listening and Presence in the Neighborhood” with Darin Nissley.

The weekend will also include opportunities for recreation, service, and neighborhood activities.

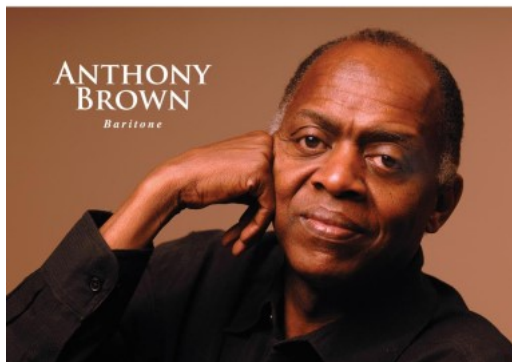
Registration cost is \$75 per person with a cap of \$300 per family. To register online, go to <http://bit.ly/EngagingMission2020>. For an event brochure, go to <http://bit.ly/EngagingMissionInfo>. ■

# Oak Grove to host concert by Anthony Brown

Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville is hosting a concert by Anthony Brown, baritone, featuring the theme “Songs and Stories of Peace, Hope and Justice.” The concert will take place at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 21. Using songs and stories from his international travels, Anthony Brown illustrates how music is a powerful tool

for bringing people together.

A freewill offering will be taken to cover expenses. For more information, see the event flier at <http://bit.ly/March21AnthonyBrown>. ■



## Credentialed leaders meet for discussion

Credentialed ministers from across Ohio Conference met together Feb. 11 in Upper Sandusky. To see more photos from the day, go to <http://bit.ly/Feb11Meeting>.



On Feb. 11 credentialed ministers from across Ohio Conference gathered at the Upper Sandusky Public Library. Thirty-five pastors and other credentialed leaders worshipped in

song, dwelled in God's Word together, discussed the recently released Mennonite Church USA Membership Guidelines Report, ate together, and prayed for one another. The

biannual meeting is part of Ohio Conference's Gathered and Sent initiative, which began in 2017. ■

## Everence's MyNeighbor Program benefits Ohio Conference, other nonprofits

**During January the Ohio Conference received a check for \$1,077.66 from Everence Financial as part of Everence's MyNeighbor credit card program.**

With the MyNeighbor program, individuals and businesses generate reward dollars for their favorite nonprofit 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. Then each January Everence writes and sends checks to the

selected charities.

In total, Everence Financial donated more than \$386,000 in January 2020 to 497 charitable organizations and congregations through its MyNeighbor program. In Northeast Ohio alone, MyNeighbor cardholders generated \$15,613 for 31 local charities.

"The MyNeighbor program is just one way we are helping our members spread generosity in our communities," said Ken Hochstetler, President and CEO of Everence. "In only two and a half years, we've donated nearly \$1 million to local and



**Everence**

global nonprofits that our members care for — that's the kind of work I am passionate about!"

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/EverenceMyNeighbor>. ■



## BOOK REVIEW

# Christians at the Border looks at immigration through the lens of scripture

By Greg Bowman

*Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (2013) by M. Daniel Carroll R.

**This author makes a profoundly simple — but pervasively challenging — request: Christians, please base your attitudes about immigration on the clear teaching in the Bible — in both testaments — before considering cultural, economic, and legal arguments. He acknowledges this might mean having to put aside convictions received from newscasts and cultural sources. Doing so, however, is key to sorting out many conflicting values that have been folded into the U.S. policy at the U.S.-Mexico border.**

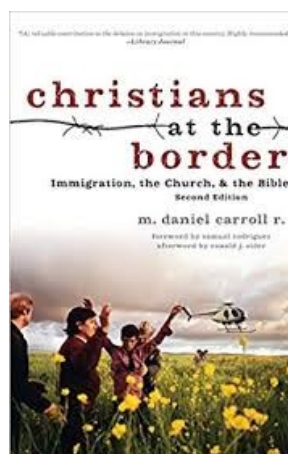
He notes the continuing place of — and contention over — immigration into the United States throughout its history. The economic “pull” for Hispanic labor collides with the cultural “push” against immigration from nativism (a resistance to perceived “others” entering one’s country). In another contrast, compassion for families seeking safety and hope has to compete with legitimate con-

cerns at the border about drug smuggling and, post 9-11, for anti-terrorism measures.

In this book, Carroll has tried to create “...a primer for a more biblically and theologically informed approach to the issue of immigration.” He works through the Old Testament, focusing on the equal value of each person created in God’s image from Genesis; Israel often being a migrant people who were saved by the hospitality of others; the commands to provide sanctuary to the migrant and stranger as a central expression of God’s nature; and God’s favor for the sojourner as one of the disadvantaged groups frequently mentioned. Engaging immigrants as sisters and brothers in God’s image is a powerful validation to them, as well.

He writes with the intention to “move Christians to reconsider their starting point in the immigration debate. Too often discussions default to passionate ideological arguments, economic wrangling, or racial sentiments that pervade the national discourse.”

Carroll also asks majority-culture Christians (the white church) to take note of the significance of newly arrived Hispanics on the religious landscape within the U.S. Immigrating and resident Hispanics constituted an estimated 8.85 mil-



lion Protestants (2015) and growing, helping to off-set the continuing majority-culture decline in U.S. Protestant affiliation and identity.

The nature of the U.S. immigration policy at the U.S.-Mexico border confronts every citizen. “Consciously or unconsciously, we all take a stand that reflects our social, economic, and racial attitudes and situations,” says Carroll, asserting that Christians necessarily face another border. “It is a metaphorical decision point. We must determine whether the place we choose to stand in the national debate will be based on the word of God or whether we will ignore its teaching and defend our opinion on other grounds.”

He asks if it is precisely the majority-culture Christians — with their orientating anchor of

**“In this book, Carroll has tried to create ‘...a primer for a more biblically and theologically informed approach to the issue of immigration.’”**

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# Pastors explore spiritual direction

Ohio Conference held a spiritual direction event for pastors at Camp Luz in Kidron Feb. 4. To see more photos, go to <http://bit.ly/Feb4SpiritualDirection>.



*“Spiritual direction can help pastors have integrity in leadership, practice self-care and self-awareness, provide a partner in prayer, and provide a safe place for vulnerability.”*

**On Feb. 4 Ohio Conference held a daylong event to introduce pastors to spiritual direction, a practice of deepening one’s relationship with God and learning to grow in one’s own spiritual maturity.**

This event, held at Camp Luz, brought together an equal number of spiritual directors and pastors, approximately 20 peo-

ple altogether. Facilitated by Janice Hershberger, Randy Murray, and Christine Nafziger, it was a day of worship, asking questions, and a one-on-one experience with a spiritual director. It was a good experience for everyone participating.

Conference leadership’s desire is for every congregation to provide their pastor the option of spiritual direction for the health of their ministry as well

as to provide a space to listen to God in the midst of their business.

Spiritual direction can help pastors have integrity in leadership, practice self-care and self-awareness, provide a partner in prayer, and provide a safe place for vulnerability, through a one-on-one relationship with a trained spiritual director. Because of these benefits of spiritual direction, congregations are encouraged to put funding for spiritual direction in their pastor’s continuing education stipend. Conference leadership is glad to talk with anyone who finds this financially challenging.

In the words of pastor and author Eugene Peterson, “It is not merely nice for pastors to have a spiritual director; it is indispensable.” ■

## Christians at the Border

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the Biblical testimony — who can set an example for the rest of the nation of hospitality and a gracious spirit toward immigrants in every way we can.

**Note:** When Carroll wrote this book in 2013, he felt that immigration reform was imminent because the system was too broken to go on. He persists in his advocacy for a biblical witness in the current era of anti-immigrant speech and administration policy. He will release his further book on the topic in May 2020. It’s a call for

an even clearer Christian-first leadership role for Christians in the immigration debate. In *The Bible and Borders: Hearing God’s Word on Immigration*, as Carroll surveys migration around the world, he brings fresh focus to the ways that the topic of migration is fundamental to the message of the Bible, as well as how it affects our understanding of God and the mission of the church.

**Tip:** A great resource for following up on Carroll’s recommendations is the Evangelical

Immigration Table website at <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com>. Its “Principles” begin with Carroll’s bedrock contention from the Genesis account: “Respects the God-given dignity of every person.” The “Biblical Resources,” “Take Action,” and “News” sections provide great inspiration.

Greg Bowman is a member of the Ohio Conference Immigration Resource Team. ■

# 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:

## Credentialing Ministry — Chair

**Name:** Vickie Yoder

**Home congregation:**

Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City

**Occupation:** Pastor

(inactive), board certified chaplain, masters-clinical pastoral counseling

**Previous service:** Interim associate pastor at Sharon Mennonite Church (completed January 2020), chair of Credentialing Ministry

**Family information:** Spouse, Bob Yoder (retired pastor); two adult daughters, Mary/Jason Sims, Bobbi/Jason Watkins; seven grandchildren

**Goals:** My goals for this coming year are to educate myself and others to work as a team to fulfill our agenda and work to serve God and His servants to the best of our ability with the



guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Certified life coach; certified bereavement counselor through the American Association of Christian Counselors; therapy dog handler supporting students in need of tutorials, grief support, and celebrations of joy; member of NOVA – National Organizations of Victims Assistance; Jonathan Alder Community Coalition member; chaplain for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

## 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

**Previous service:** Member of Credentialing Ministry



## Ministry Development Team

**Name:** Deanna (Dee) Custar

**Occupation:**

Pastor/CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) coordinator

**Previous**

**service:** Pastoral team member at Salem Mennonite in Waldron, Michigan, for 16 years; served on Credentialing Minis-



try for Ohio Conference; current sexual misconduct response person for western Ohio

**Family information:** Husband, Dan; two married sons; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Adventure travel, throwing pottery, acting and hosting parties! (I play a mean nose flute.)

## Ministry Development Team — Faith Focus

**Name:** Kenneth S. Sims, but please just call me Ken

**Home congregation:**

Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City

**Occupation:**

Office manager/client services representative with Everence Financial in Plain City

**Previous service:** Served several years as an elder at Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland and Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City; adult Sunday school teacher; and I have served two terms as the faith leader on the Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team

**Family information:** Married to Grace Sims (50 years on April 3, 2020); father to three adult children (Shannon, Jason and Bradley); grandfather (aka Paka) to seven, including four girls, ages 22, 19, 14, 11, and three boys, ages 9, 9, and 8.

They all help to keep me young.



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# Volunteers

Continued from page 11

**Goals:** 1. To help pastors and congregations expand the role of speaking faith into action in our planning, worship, our daily speech and our daily activities; 2. To learn how to speak our faith in all that we do.

**Hobbies/special interests:** Reading (history and autobiographies), motorsports (endurance sports car racing)

## Ministry Development Team — Worship Focus

**Name:** Steve Schmid

**Home congregation:**

Wooster Mennonite Church

**Occupation:**

Retired president of Smith Foods

**Previous service:** Member of Ministry Development Team



## Stewardship Ministry — Endowment Focus

**Name:** Chelsea Waidelich

**Home congregation:**

West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon

**Occupation:**

Accountant

**Previous service:** Previously served with Stewardship Ministry team for one term

**Family information:** Married to Greg

**Goals:** My goals for this term are to continue to learn the history and purpose of the various funds the Conference holds and work with the other members to discern the best use of Conference resources.

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Enjoy reading, playing volleyball, and traveling

## Stewardship Ministry — Endowment Focus

**Name:** Marion Beyeler

**Home congregation:** Orrville Mennonite Church

**Occupation:**

Retired volunteer

**Previous service:**

Member of Stewardship Ministry, Conference moderator



## Stewardship Ministry — Finance Focus

**Name:** Christine Yoder

**Home congregation:**

Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty

**Occupation:**

Staff accountant

**Previous service:** Member of Stewardship Ministry



## Gifts Discernment Ministry — Chair

**Name:** Alvis Pettker

**Home congregation:**

Friendship Mennonite Church, Bedford Heights

**Occupation:**

Pastor

**Family information:** Spouse, Ruth Pettker

**Hobbies/special interests:** I like to run, and am training to run the Cleveland Marathon in 2020.



## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Eldina Nussbaum

**Home congregation:** Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman

**Occupation:**

Retired elementary teacher

**Previous service:**

Member of Gifts Discernment Ministry, board member at Camp Luz, Conference delegate



**Family information:** Husband, David Nussbaum

**Goals:** To find persons to serve in Ohio Conference positions

**Hobbies/special interests:**

Gardening, volunteering at World Crafts in Kidron, Ohio

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Larry Short

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

**Occupation:**

Semi-retired farmer

**Previous service:**

Member of Gifts Discernment Ministry



## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Robert E. Esh

**Home congregation:**

Valley View Mennonite Church, Spartansburg, Pennsylvania

**Occupation:**

Pastor (soon to be retired!)



Continued on page 13

# Volunteers

Continued from page 12

**Previous service:** I served on Gifts Discernment many years ago and more recently on the Conference Minister Search Committee.

**Family information:** Married to Janet; five adult children; six grandchildren; and caring for a disabled sister

**Goals:** I hope to see Ohio Conference continue as a dynamic expression of our shared mission and fellowship.

**Hobbies/special interests:** Beekeeping, reading, and playing guitar and singing folk music at open mics and jam sessions

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Wendell Slagell

**Home congregation:**

Huber Mennonite Church, New Carlisle

**Occupation:** I'm

currently in building material distribution and a part-time pastor at Huber.

**Previous service:** I have been at Huber for 18 years, serving as youth leader for 10, and pastor for the past five years.



**Family information:** Married for nearly 22 years with five children, ages 18 down to 6.

**Hobbies/special interests:** In my free time I enjoy working outside.

## Gifts Discernment Ministry

**Name:** Lois Bontrager

**Home congregation:**

Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville

**Occupation:** Retired

stewardship representative, Everence ■



## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Pastoral notes

Dee Custar has retired from her role as pastor at Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Michigan. She served on the pastoral team at Salem Mennonite for 16 years. A retirement party for Dee was held at Salem Mennonite on Jan. 31. ■

Walter Campbell was installed as associate pastor at Sharon Mennonite Church in Plain City on Sunday, Feb. 9, during the morning worship service. Conference Minister Dick Barrett

preached the sermon, titled “Called to Ministry,” based on Ephesians 4:1-13. Walter’s installation took place during Sharon Mennonite’s Renewal Weekend. ■

### Bluffton University

BLUFFTON, Ohio — Several students from Ohio Conference congregations have been named to the dean’s list for the fall term at Bluffton University.

Students with a GPA of 3.6 or higher are eligible for the dean’s list. Ohio Conference students on the dean’s list include **Ethan Zaerr** of Archbold, Central Mennonite Church in Archbold;

and **Lilyana Yoder** of West Liberty, Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty.

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. Four students from Ohio Conference congregations received this recognition:

**Emma Cobb** of Archbold, Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker; **Syd Cobb** of Archbold, Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker; **Anneliese Horner** of Apple Creek, Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron; and **Rowena Zuercher** of Apple Creek, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron. ■

## Conference Calendar

### MAR

- 20-21 Mother-Daughter Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 21 Anthony Brown in Concert, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville
- 28 Maple Syrup Festival, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron

### APR

- 3-5 Men's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 4 Healthy Boundaries 101 Training, Conference Office, Kidron
- 24-25 Father-Son Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron

### MAY

- 2 MCC Great Lakes Centennial Celebration Picnic, Gerber Building, Kidron

### JUN

- 12-14 Hispanic Family Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 26-28 Engaging Mission 2020 (Missional Festival), Bluffton University, Bluffton

### OCT

- 10 Healthy Boundaries 201 Training, SpringHaven Counseling Center, Dundee

### NOV

- 6-8 Joy in the Journey: An Event for the Wives of Ohio Conference Pastors, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin, Ohio
- 7 Healthy Boundaries 201 Training, Salem Mennonite Church, Elida

vited to send a resume and statement of intent, including the broad strokes of your vision and thoughts about a strategic plan, to [president@mennohealth.org](mailto:president@mennohealth.org). More information is available at [www.mennohealth.org](http://www.mennohealth.org).

**Service Adventure is a gap year program for young adults ages 17-20** that provides 10 ½ months of learning “in the field.” Take a break from the classroom, test out a vocation, experience self-discovery, all while serving God and living in Christian community. Learn more at [www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve).

**From Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes: Thank you for your generous, heart-warming response to the desperate needs of migrants in crisis at the southern U.S. border!**

Since June 2019, churches and individuals across the Great Lakes region donated more than 350 kits and more than \$65,000. MCC has provided a fact sheet which shows how your gifts are being utilized through 11 local partners in Texas and Arizona. To see the fact sheet, go to <http://bit.ly/MCCCareKitsReport>. ■

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

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

## Back page briefings...

**Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) is seeking a half-time executive director** to start between May and September 2020 who is committed to Anabaptist

values and the mission of MHF, has proven skills in administration, communication, and networking, and has an intergenerationally compelling vision for MHF. Interested persons are in-