

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

MAY/JUNE 2020



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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Some thoughts on ministering to young adults

An important part of Christ's Body

By Ramon Lianez
Central Mennonite Church

I believe that young adults are an important part of Christ's Body, but we are not ministering to them accordingly. The ball is being dropped on both sides; however, through appropriate means and in God's timing, we all can turn our present situation around. I do not attest that I am an expert in this field, but through reading, prayer, experience and success and failure, I might have some information that can be of help to others.

I have taken some time to reflect on several questions from the Ohio Conference Youth and Young Adult Min-

Stop calling them kids!
What you think is what you say. And what you say only reinforces your thoughts.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

istry Team: **What have been your successes?**
How have you learned from your failures?
Where is God working now? Here is what I can offer:

When my own children became 18, during their graduation party I had them choose individuals that helped form them as men.

Continued on page 3

Applications pour in for COVID-19 congregational relief fund

By Susan Kim

GOSHEN, Indiana — Anabaptist churches in the U.S. have submitted more than 200 applications to the new COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund since its launch on April 13, 2020.

The great majority of the applications have come from churches serving racially or ethnically diverse communities — congregations whose needs center around lost jobs and income that have led to a standstill of ministry in underserved communities that

most need hope.

"Applications have been pouring in," said MDS executive director Kevin King, of the Fund, which was created by [Mennonite Disaster Service](#), [Everence®](#) and [Mennon-](#)

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EDITORIAL

How will we use this time?

As Conference Minister Dick Barrett notes in his column on page 4, by this point in the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are longing for a time when our lives go back to normal.

Social distancing guidelines definitely have upended our lives, and it appears that even if guidelines begin to

be relaxed, “normal” is a long way off. So how will we use this time?

I recently read the [May issue of *The Parish Paper*, which was titled “Yes, Congregations Can Learn New Habits.”](#) In that issue, author Dana Horrell noted that we may not like disruptions (such as a pan-

demic), but they can make it easier for us to drop old habits and adopt new ones.

During this time of disrupted routines, I encourage us to do some deep thinking. Let’s consider what new habits we would like our congregations to form when we are able to meet in person once more.

— ahl

RESOURCE CORNER

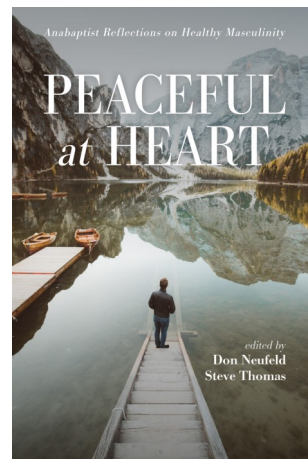
Peaceful at Heart explores healthy masculinity

What does Anabaptism have to teach us about healthy masculinity? Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas, coordinators of Mennonite Men Canada and Mennonite Men USA, respectively, have edited a collection of essays, *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity*, with support from the Institute of Mennonite Studies to answer this question.

This project of Mennonite Men is a collaborative effort by and for men, promoting

an Anabaptist Christian perspective on masculinity. Retired AMBS President Sara Wenger Shenk provides an afterword in which she writes that the “chorus of male voices represents ... a breakthrough moment for Mennonite men in particular — provoking an urgently needed conversation about what it takes to form and be peaceful men.”

To read more about this book, see this excerpt from the Mennonite Men newsletter: [https://bit.ly/](https://bit.ly/PeacefulatHeart)



[PeacefulatHeart](#). The book is available from [wipfand-stock.com](#). ■

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Young Adults

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We gathered around my sons, laid hands on them and prayed for these things: To thank God for who they are, thank him for bringing the people in their lives to establish themselves as men, for me to hand them back over to Him, and lastly, to help me to see them as adults. This final request was for me to set it in my mind that I would respect them as any other adult and treat them as such. Sometimes parents and church members can't shake loose the mental image of the kid that used to run amok in the sanctuary. But if we cannot begin to address and rightfully interact with them as adults, don't be surprised that they will go to another group that will.

Separate young adults into smaller age groups. Some of you might not be aware that the government states that a young adult is age 18 to 35, and some churches use this as a means to form their young adult ministry. If you really look at it, what does an 18-year-old, that has just graduated from high school have in common with a 30-year-old who possibly is married with children? It is best to split up young adults into groups for ages 18 to 24 and 25 to 35. This will allow for better conversations and relationships. Furthermore, many of the topics that either group will entertain will be better suited for the participants if these age boundaries are implemented.

Support ALL young adults. Between the ages of 18 to 24 there seem to be two general groups of young adults: 1) Those who stay in the local



community to work, and 2) Those who leave and go to college. I really take issue with how some people treat the young adults who chose to stay in the area and begin their lives in full-time employment, versus the individuals that leave to seek more education. I have found that the Mennonite Church all but worships higher education, and although we are polite to those that do not go to college, we tend to neglect those that remain with us. Statistically, those that go to college will not return to your community or congregation once they are finished.

It is the young adults who are still in your congregation that will most often take up the mantle of Christian leadership and service. We not only have to see them as success stories in their own right but support

them also. Many churches provide financial grants and all means of support (care packages, cards, etc.) to their college students, but what is there for the young adults that remain in our faith family? There should be money for them also. What if one wants to get a commercial driver's license or pick up a certified skill from a local trade school? The list can go on and on.

Minister to whoever is there. When the college students are back during a break, our young adult group can have as many as 12 people, if everyone comes. Most often not everyone shows up, regardless. However, I have four young men who have decided to work in agriculture and have been pretty consistent in their week-

Pastor Ramon Lianez (right) and Eric Short, both of Central Mennonite Church in Archbold, meet for coffee at Ramon's fire ring. Ramon is looking forward to the time when social distancing guidelines will be relaxed and he will be able to use his fire ring while hosting young adult gatherings.

"I really take issue with how some people treat the young adults who chose to stay in the area and begin their lives in full-time employment, versus the individuals that leave to seek more education."

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CONFERENCE MINISTER MUSINGS

Jesus is the Center

By Dick Barrett
Conference Minister

More than 10 years ago now Palmer Becker wrote a small book titled *What is an Anabaptist Christian?* The booklet was his attempt to highlight the distinctiveness of an “Anabaptist Christian,” and he did so by highlighting three core values: 1) Jesus is the center of our faith; 2) Community is the center of our lives; and 3) Reconciliation is the center of our work. His booklet and core values were widely accepted by many in our Mennonite/Anabaptist churches, so much so that many people when asked, “What is an Anabaptist Christian?” they will respond with those three themes, even if they can’t quote them exactly.

In Ohio Conference’s constitution we say that “Jesus is the of center of who we are and all we do.” But what does it mean when we say “Jesus is the center?” It seems like many people have different ideas of who Jesus was and is. We often seem to try and make Jesus into our own image or the image which we like. We need to take seriously the words of the writer of the Book of Hebrews, “Jesus Christ is the same yes-

terday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

As I write this, we find ourselves in a time like few of us have ever experienced: the coronavirus pandemic claiming many lives, economic uncertainty, sheltering in place, unable to meet as churches, etc. This challenging experience comes at a time after many of our churches in America have experienced great upheaval over the past 10 years — changes in attendance, diversity in theological doctrine, loss of cultural status, an emphasis on being missional, etc. I would make the claim that this upheaval, and the change that is coming about because of it, is not necessarily all bad. I hear people saying things like they “just can’t wait until things get back to normal” or “there’s going to be a new normal.” Maybe the normal that we had was not so good. Maybe normal is not good. While Jesus doesn’t change — he is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow — Jesus was anything but normal. The writer of Hebrews also tells us that Jesus is the “exact representation of God’s being” (Hebrews 1:3). The apostle Paul writes in his second letter to the early Christians at Corinth, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18).



Not only do we find ourselves in a unique time in the history of all our lives, we also find ourselves in a unique time in the history of all mankind — the time between Jesus’ first coming and his second coming. Though we were almost all secluded in our homes, we recently celebrated Easter and the remembrance of Jesus Christ rising on that first Easter morning some 2,000 years ago. In several weeks we will be celebrating Pentecost and the sending of God’s Holy Spirit upon the earliest believers to initiate the church age. For us today, those two events have come together — Jesus has risen, and the Holy Spirit is present among believers.

As image bearers of the triune God, what would it look like for us to live as if Jesus were present in each of us during this time? Yes, this is a challenging time, both in the world and in

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“I would make the claim that this upheaval, and the change that is coming about because of it, is not necessarily all bad.”

Musings

Continued from page 4

the life of the church, but what would happen if we saw it as an opportunity to be Jesus in new ways, in our families, our churches, our communities, our nation and the world? What are the things that we have had to lay down during this time that would be good not to pick back

up because they are not Jesus-like or they distract us from Jesus being the center? What are the things that we have taken for granted for too long that are important to beholding the glory of the Lord — like worship, community, and ministering to the least of these?

What is an Anabaptist Christian? is available as a PDF from Mennonite Mission Network. To download a copy, go to <https://www.mennonitemission.net/Downloads/DL.MissioDei18.E.pdf>.

“What are the things that we have had to lay down during this time that would be good not to pick back up because they are not Jesus-like or they distract us from Jesus being the center?”

Young Adults

Continued from page 3

ly participation in church and meeting together. They are the ones that tithe, are learning where and how to minister, and possibly, if they stay, will raise families. They have local ties to the people in the community on a yearly basis and therefore can share Jesus with their friends and family.

they are important collectively, but also as individuals.

Find ways to educate them on the responsibilities of being a Christian adult. We cannot assume that a young adult has been prepared to be an adult Christian. Yes, they

manner of other things that they must understand to be an effective part of the Body of Jesus? I have discerned that the majority of these issues are not explicitly taught to young adults, but we “hope” they will pick it up along the way! This thinking is doing them and ourselves a disservice.

We can teach them these things, but what we need to do next is extremely critical: We need to encourage, challenge and provide places for them to share and serve.

“We cannot assume that a young adult has been prepared to be an adult Christian.”



YOUNG ADULTS

I do love all of the young adults that God has brought for me to love and serve, but those that are here with me right now are the ones that I can directly serve. I come up with topics and issues that directly affect their lives. I did not grow up as a farmer, but these young men have. I learn from them so I might better relate to them. They suggested I go out and get myself a pair of boots (think cowboy boots), and I will definitely do this! I make it a point to have a meal with them or just a piece of pie and coffee. I want each one of them to know

might be able to recite scripture, the books of the Bible, and all matter of biblical knowledge. However, do they understand the Great Commission, spiritual gifting (including their own gifting), why fellowship and worship in the community are important, and all

Faith and fun. Jesus was not all stoic and a killjoy, and we should not be either. We must find time to spend with young adults and have fun! I had a Christmas party and invited a young man that didn't attend our church; matter of fact, he was Greek Orthodox. I was planning on having 25-plus young adults

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Young Adults

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“Having spent the last 20-some-odd years in the rural areas of Ohio, I see fathers and mothers teach their kids how to run the family farm or business before they eventually retire. Why is it that we are not grooming our young adults to lead?”

attend. We had five! It was a blast! We went along with the games we planned, presents were distributed, and everyone had more than enough to eat. I could have gotten bummed out or thought maybe I was doing something wrong. But I realized to do so would have messed up the time we had together! Growing faith and having fun together is part of the ministry. Your young adults are in a challenging, daunting yet awesome and exciting time of their lives. Whoever shows up for these activities needs you to love on them and build up their faith!

Recognize they too are a part of the congregation. Too often the mindset is that young adults don't want to be there, or they are being looked over. We have to stop this thinking. Have you stopped to ask them if the worship music and other areas of church life are ministering to them? Of course, they are different than what earlier generations are used to. Hymns usually come from hundreds of years ago. Camp songs and the hits from the Jesus Movement are just as foreign to them as today's contemporary Christian music is to some in the pews today. The days of waiting to hand the church keys over on our death-

beds are long gone. Young adults will go somewhere else that they can identify with or leave church altogether. Music is just one area of segregation of young adults from the older generations. Must love of traditional sacred cows or fear of

change put a wall of hostility between Brothers and Sisters in Christ regardless of age?

Young Adult Leaders NOW. This brings me to my last focal point: Bringing young adults into the leadership of the present church. They are not the future church but the PRESENT church. If you look at the boards and leadership positions of most churches today (and in the past for that matter) you will probably see an average age of adults in their 50s. Why is that? Having spent the last 20-some-odd years in the rural areas of Ohio, I see fathers and mothers teach their kids how to run the family farm or business before they eventually retire. Why is it that we are not grooming our young adults to lead? Identify young adults for leadership. Come alongside them now and see where their passions lie.

I have purchased a fire ring that I intend on using to sit around and get to know the young adults in my congregation better. Also, I plan on getting a smoker, because the guys that stay local want to get down to some pulled pork and ribs! I

look forward to these future times and many more! I love the young adults that Jesus has honored me to minister to. I pray

that you all will also recognize the gifts that they are in each one of our faith families. Love and guide them while we are here and they are present.

God's blessing on all of you, my Brothers and Sisters,

Pastor Ramon

Ramon Lianez is a member of the pastoral team at Central Mennonite Church in Archbold.

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Development Team is seeking stories from Ohio Conference congregations about how they are working with youth and young adults. They would like to hear from you. What have been your successes? How have you learned from your failures? Where is God working now? If you have a story that you would be willing to share with the Conference, please contact Ann Leaman at ohioevangel@gmail.com. ■

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Congregational Relief Fund

Continued from page 1

[ite Central Committee U.S.](#) to aid churches facing financial crisis due to COVID-19.

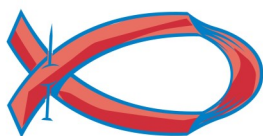
Seeded with a combined \$550,000 from the three organizations, the Fund's organizers are urgently calling for additional donations as the needs, already great, will continue to rise.

"We are a community of faith, called to support one another through mutual aid," said Leonard Dow, Everence stewardship and development specialist, and a key leader in the development and implementation of Everence strategies to serve urban churches and communities. "It is vitally important that we walk alongside our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ during this unprecedented time of need."

In addition to financial help, many people also depend on the spiritual and pastoral care that their churches provide, King added.

"These grants are a lifeline for many churches that serve the most vulnerable in these economic crises. We are one body, let our generosity resource the members that need it most,"

RELIEF FUND



said Dina Gonzalez-Pina, MCC Ethnicity and Gender Equity Specialist.

Recipient churches are using the grants to meet their congregational financial needs (such as rent, mortgage, utilities, and staff salaries) or to help families and individuals recover from COVID-19 hardships. Priority is being given to churches with budgets of less than \$50,000 per year.

Donations to the COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund may be made here to help meet the many requests for assistance:

<https://mds.mennonite.net/covid-19-donations/>

About the COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), Everence and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. have joined together to launch a COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund to aid churches facing financial crisis due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The Fund will assist churches with historic roots or relationships with the Anabaptist faith community. Priority will be given to racially and ethnically diverse churches serving in historically under-resourced communities (i.e. communities and households that are underbanked, underinsured and/or uninsured).

Recipient churches may use the grants to assist families and individuals in their midst recover from COVID-19 hardships. While primarily focused on domestic relief needs, a portion of the fund will support global partners through the Mennonite World Conference Global Sharing Fund. ■

"We are a community of faith, called to support one another through mutual aid."
— Leonard Dow, Everence stewardship and development specialist

Summer missional festival canceled

Please note: Because there is uncertainty about when restrictions will be lifted for public gatherings, the Ohio Conference Leadership Team has decided to cancel Engaging Mission 2020. This intergenerational

missional festival was scheduled to take place June 24-26 at Bluffton University.

Plans are already underway for a missional conference next March. The 2021 missional con-

ference is scheduled for March 4-5 at Central Christian School in Kidron. The featured speaker will be Brad Roth, pastor and author of *God's Country: Faith, Hope, and the Future of the Rural Church*. ■

Hispanic families suffering more in the era of COVID-19

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By Haroldo Nunes
Executive Director
Open Arms Hispanic Ministry

Hello my sisters and brothers,

I would like to start this article with a quote from Jim Wallis of Sojourners:

"We believe that the ultimate test of our discipleship to Jesus Christ is how we treat the most vulnerable in society, or as Jesus refers to them in Matthew 25, 'the least of these' among us. Amid this COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing more than ever who is most vulnerable to contracting and dying from this new disease — and it's a function of deeply embedded societal structures that create and perpetuate grotesque racial and economic inequity. As we've been saying

in recent weeks, both as the data has made horrifyingly clear and as we've seen whose friends and relatives have disproportionately gotten sick or died of COVID-19, poverty and racism have become pre-existing conditions that increase the chances of contracting or dying from this lethal disease."

Unhappily, our Hispanic brothers and sisters are suffering a lot more than we are in this pandemic that has changed social behavior worldwide. I want to applaud the Congress and Senate for acting to pass a number of large relief packages with broad bipartisan support. But disgracefully, the truth is that the less fortunate in our society, both before and now in the context of the pandemic, are helped very little or not at all by recent congressional actions, despite trillions of dollars of new spending. In particular, Hispanics, black Americans, incarcerated individuals, people in Immigration detention, and Native Americans are facing challenges like never before.

Sadly, non-citizen Hispanics are

not receiving any help from the relief package even though they have been paying taxes for many years with an ITIN (Individual Tax ID Number). Because they lack a Social Security card, they are denied a check from the government. Also, if an American citizen is married to someone who, in process with Immigration, has not yet received his or her Social Security card, the whole family will be penalized, not receiving any assistance from the relief package. These are two of the many examples that deny help to the immigrant Hispanic community.

It is time for us, as American citizens, to contact our elected officials in government, asking for just and fair immigration reform that will give status to more than 11 million people in this country who are planting and harvesting the produce that we buy cheaply and eat every day. The other concern that advocates are having right now is an executive order from the federal administration forcing meat processors to stay open, even when many of their employees are sick. The truth is, that the majority of the employees at meat processing plants are Hispanics.

Saying this, I would like to commend the board of directors of Open Arms Hispanic Ministries for their bold decision to double the Compassion Fund of the ministry from \$3,000 to \$6,000

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Suffering

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and, if there is continued need, to expand to \$10,000 to help Hispanics who have lost their jobs at restaurants, factories, etc.

I would like to thank our stakeholders for your generous support of Open Arms Hispanic Ministries. The donations that are coming in are allowing us to compensate for the income lost from the cancellation of our annual fundraiser banquet due to COVID-19. Because of your generosity, we have been able to help 17 Hispanic families in our community with grocery gift cards and seven more families with help for rent and the laundromat. We have purchased 13 more gift cards to

keep distributing to needy families. In addition, one of our board members is sewing masks to distribute to Hispanics who need them.

In my daily work, I'm taking prepared food, groceries and gift cards for families, helping people with doctors' appointments (over the phone or on the computer), sometimes going to emergency rooms, helping with counseling and so on. Last week we were able to reunite a minor who had been in immigration detention with their family in Wayne County. God is good!

Thanks to God for our caring community, and to everyone

who is doing something to brighten the lives of the less fortunate!

Please keep safe and be blessed!

If you are interested in working to raise awareness of immigration issues, consider joining the Ohio Conference Immigration Resource Team. The team is seeking new members, especially from the western part of the conference. Contact Coordinator of Volunteers Alys Short at alysashort@gmail.com if you would like to join the team.

To read more of the column by Jim Wallis quoted at the beginning of this article, see <https://sojo.net/articles/unequal-suffering-heres-how-congress-should-help>. ■

I would like to thank our stakeholders for your generous support of Open Arms Hispanic Ministries. The donations that are coming in are allowing us to compensate for the income lost from the cancellation of our annual fundraiser banquet due to COVID-19.

2020 Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale to be an online auction only

Due to the uncertainty COVID-19 has brought to our lives, the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale Board has decided to hold an online auction only rather than a physical event and auction this year. Many auctions of all types have been cancelled or at least postponed.

Plans are to still offer items from the quilt and wood auctions, as well as silent auction items, kids auction items and many other items.

To give quilters, crafters and craftsmen additional time, the relief sale board has moved back the dates of the event from the traditional first week-



end in August. Sewing circles have not been able to meet to prepare quilts, and event organizers have not been able to collect furniture and other items yet. Normally, this is well under way by May.

The 2019 sale also included an online auction, so many things are already in place to hold an online auction. There will be "Buy It Now" items available to

buy from Sept. 14 to 24, as well as the online auction from Sept. 26 to Oct. 3. Details are still being worked out and will be updated as information is available.

For more information, see the news release from the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale Board at <https://bit.ly/2020OhioMennoniteReliefSale>. ■

ABOUT PEOPLE

Bluffton University

BLUFFTON, Ohio — An incoming student at Bluffton University has been awarded the university's full-tuition Presidential Scholarship, valued at more than \$140,000 for four years.

Danielle King of Wauseon, Ohio, is the February session scholarship recipient.

King, the daughter of Douglas and Paula King, will be a graduate of Pettisville High School this year. She has been active in National Honor Society, volleyball and track. She also serves as the vice president of her youth group at Tedrow Mennonite Church.

King is one of two winners of Bluffton's annual Presidential Scholarship competition, which brings numerous high-achieving high school seniors to campus to write an essay in response to a faculty lecture and previously assigned readings. Invited students had grade point averages of 3.5 or higher and a composite score of at least 24 on the ACT or 1160 on the SAT.

All students who participated in the November or February competitions and choose to attend Bluffton in fall 2020 receive a \$1,000 annual scholarship just for participating. ■



Danielle King

Eastern Mennonite University

Several students from Ohio Conference congregations were recently honored by Eastern Mennonite University (EMU).

The EMU Biology Department gives several awards for exceptional academic, scholarly and service accomplishments.

Caroline Lehman of Life-Bridge Community Church in Dover was named Outstanding Senior Biology Student, for initiative, wisdom, collegiality and integrity, as well as academic excellence. She is the daughter of Joel and Sarah Lehman.

Also receiving a Biology Department award was

Alexandra Raber of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church. She was one of two students receiving the Award for Excellence in

Undergraduate Research, for exceptional performance in independent research. She is the daughter of Phil and Miriam Raber.

Anna Ressler of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron is the daughter of Winfred and Barb Ressler. She was named Tutor of the Year at EMU. She is a four-year tutor, a psychology major who tutored writing, speech and psychology. "She provided caring and competent support for many students, meeting them at their instructional level and moving them forward to academic success," said Linda Gnagey, director of the Academic Success Center at EMU.

Anna Ressler also was awarded the Judy H. Mullet Award for Internship Excellence. "Anna stood out for her exceptional contributions at her field placement, Generations Crossing," said Professor Ryan Thompson.

Donaldo Lleshi, a biology and pre-med major from Lezhe, Albania, was one of 10 students receiving the Cords of Distinction Award. As a high school junior, he came to study at Central Christian School in Kidron, and he boarded with Bill and Allison Seymour and became a part of Orrville Mennonite Church. He is taking a gap year and will be working as a medical translator in Harrisonburg before he begins medical school.

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ABOUT PEOPLE Continued from page 10

Faculty, staff and fellow students nominated the Cords of Distinction recipients, who were cited for their “significant and verifiable impact” on the university and on student life;

for their contributions to developing the institution’s positive image; for substantial contributions to the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County area and beyond; for their high academic

and social standing; and their embodiment of EMU’s shared values of Christian discipleship, community, service and peace-building. ■

Ohio Conference Cast

After more than three years and dozens of podcast episodes, Thomas Dunn and Bill Seymour have decided to resign as hosts of the Ohio Conference Cast podcast.

The Ohio Conference Cast began in the fall of 2016 with the goal of creating another avenue for people to learn about happenings within the Ohio Conference. Since that time, Bill and Thomas have shared conversations with a wide variety of guests. They have interviewed people from Ohio Conference congregations about local missions, as well as talking with Ohio Conference staff members and interviewing people from the wider church, such as Mennonite Church USA Executive Director Glen Guyton, Ted Swartz of Ted and Co., and Alan and Debra Hirsch.



Bill Seymour (left) and Thomas Dunn (right) interview Cliff Brubaker for the first episode of the Ohio Conference Cast, a podcast series found on the Conference website and on iTunes. Ohio Conference Cast began in the fall of 2016.

The Ohio Conference Leadership Team and Ministry Development Team have greatly appreciated Thomas and Bill’s leadership as hosts for the Ohio Conference Cast, and we thank them for all the hours they have volunteered, as well as the humor they have shared with all of us. We also would like to thank Norm Sohar, who has faithfully volunteered as sound engineer for the podcast series.

Bill and Thomas are planning to release one final podcast episode to reflect on their time as hosts. The future of the podcast series is not certain at this time, although the Leadership Team and Ministry Development Team are open to continuing if new hosts can be found. Would you like to hear previous podcast episodes? You can find them at <http://bit.ly/OhioConferenceCast>. ■

University Euclid congregation closes

University Euclid Christ New Testament Church, an Ohio Conference congregation in Cleveland, has closed, reports Regional Pastor Ralph Reinford. The congregation’s pastors, Brian Anderson and Sheila

Spencer Anderson, resigned in September 2019. A small group from the congregation continued meeting through February of this year, when the congregation decided to close.

The congregation intends to donate the church property to the Ohio Conference, and the Ohio Conference Leadership Team is considering what to do with the property. ■

Conference Calendar

SEPT

- 11-13 Women's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 26-Oct. 3 Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale Auction, online event

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

MAR 2021

- 4-5 Missional Conference, Central Christian School, Kidron
- 5-6 Annual Conference Assembly, Central Christian School, Kidron

Back page briefings...

Ohio Conference will hold a retreat for pastors' wives Nov. 6-8. *Joy in the Journey: An Event for the Wives of Ohio Conference Pastors* will take place at the St. Francis Spirituality Center in Tiffin, Ohio. Miriam Zehr, associate pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, will be the retreat speaker.

The cost for this retreat is \$125 per person. Registration

is due by Oct. 9. For more details, please see <https://bit.ly/JoyintheJourneyBrochure>. Online registration is available at <http://bit.ly/OCPastorsWives>.

Camp Luz in Kidron will not hold summer camps in 2020. In a letter to constituents, Camp Director Andrew Michaels wrote, "After a thorough process which included consulting

with health officials, examining the most current guidelines from the CDC and Ohio Department of Health, and considering how we might adapt our activities, schedules, facilities, and practices to protect against the spread of the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19, we have reached the conclusion that we cannot make camp as safe as it needs to be this summer and we must cancel our 2020 Summer Camp Program." To see the full letter, go to <https://bit.ly/CampLuzSummer2020>.

Are you interested in sharing ideas with others who are planning worship? Anabaptist Worship Network, a new Facebook group conversation, is hosted by Katie Graber and Anneli Loepp Thiessen. This Facebook group is a meetup for pastors, worship leaders, song leaders, and those interested in Anabaptist worship. Participants can ask questions, share ideas and resources, and make connections. To participate, go to www.facebook.com/groups/166908377683455/.



OHIO MENNONITE
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News & Views of Ohio Conference

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