

# OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

*News & Views of Ohio Conference*

SEPT/OCT 2022



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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## Ministry Grants fund local projects

**The Ohio Conference Ministry Development Team (MDT) has awarded three grants totaling \$15,225. The MDT approved these grants at its meeting on Aug. 18, 2022. Grants will provide funds toward the following projects:**

**Community Garden** — Grant funds will be given toward the creation of a community garden in Archbold. The goal of this project is to provide gardening space for residents of a subsidized housing complex in the area. Partnering organizations will

include Zion Mennonite Church, the village of Archbold and the Archbold FISH Food Pantry.

**Van for Akron Swahili Mennonite Church** — Grant funds will be given toward the purchase of a used 15-passenger van for use by the Akron Swahili Mennonite Church. Other congregations working with the Akron congregation to fund this purchase are Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville Mennonite Church, Wooster Mennonite Church, Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville and



Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster. Note: This grant was previously approved in 2019, but funds were not distributed at that time due

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## *Starting this fall*

## Please join us in weekly prayer times

**As Conference Minister Dick Barrett notes in his column on page 4 of this issue, "Ohio Conference's year of review is synonymous with a year of discernment. We are seeking God's will together for the future of Ohio Conference."**

**To aid in this discernment process, the Ohio Conference Leadership Team is inviting everyone in the conference to take part in several spiritual practices, including Dwelling in the Word (scripture reading), pray-**



**er, communal discernment and fasting.**

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## EDITORIAL

# Have you been Dwelling in the Word?

In the last issue of *Ohio Mennonite Evangel*, Conference Minister Dick Barrett invited everyone in the Ohio Conference to read through the New Testament together as a spiritual practice as we go through

this year of review and discernment. A suggested reading schedule is available at <https://bit.ly/SpiritualDisciplines>.

If you haven't been reading through the New Testament with us so far, I en-

courage you to join us now. It's not too late to start. You may be surprised by new insights as you follow the daily readings. I know I have been.

— ahl

## RESOURCE CORNER

# Check out these curated resource collections

**By Ann Leaman**  
**Ohio Conference**  
**Resource Advocate**

I know I have previously recommended CommonWord, which is a collaboration of Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University. This month, I'd like to highlight CommonWord's collections of resources for a variety of topics.

CommonWord has a collection of World Communion Sunday resources available for download. Traditionally, many congregations celebrate World Communion Sunday on the

first Sunday in October. To see these resources, go to <https://bit.ly/WorldCommunion>.

Another collection at CommonWord features resources for World Peace Sunday, which is usually observed on the Sunday closest to the United Nations-recognized International Day of Peace, Sept. 21. While your congregation might already have plans for observing World Peace Sunday, you may want to check out these resources for next year. They are available at <https://bit.ly/>

[PeaceSundayResources](#). (Another Peace Sunday resource is available from Mennonite World Conference at <https://bit.ly/2022PeaceSundayResources>.)

CommonWord also has a collection of resources related to Thanksgiving. You can find them at <https://bit.ly/CommonWordThanksgiving>.

Interested in seeing everything CommonWord has to offer? View the CommonWord website at <https://www.commonword.ca>. ■

## Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

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# Ministry Grants

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to some outstanding issues regarding ownership and insurance. Now that Akron Swahili Mennonite Church has established itself as a church in the state of Ohio, the congregation can legally own the vehicle.

**3rd Street Family Green Space** — First Mennonite Church in Canton and Lighthouse Ministries are receiving funding toward the creation of 3rd Street Family Green Space. The project calls for investment in the empty lot across the street from the church building as a green space which will be available for the church's neighbors and neighborhood, while still remaining functional for various church and Lighthouse activities. Note: The EPA defines "green space" as land that is partly or completely covered



with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation. Some examples include parks, community gardens, cemeteries, public seating areas, public plazas, and playgrounds. Grant funds will be used for signage, a picnic table and trash can.

Since 2012, the Ohio Conference Ministry Development

Team has awarded Ministry Grants to Ohio Conference congregations and related groups for ministry projects.

Funding for these grants comes from funds accumulated in years in which the Conference completed the fiscal year with a surplus. ■

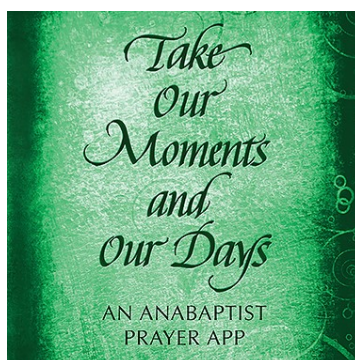
Grant funds will go toward creating a green space in Canton across the street from First Mennonite Church. Shown is a proposed design for a sign for the 3rd Street Family Green Space.

# Prayer

Continued from page 1

**One of the opportunities to practice our faith together, growing out of our commitments from the most recent Annual Conference Assembly gathering, is to join in a collaborative prayer practice this fall.**

We will meet on Zoom from noon to 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 14 through Nov. 23, using [Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book](#) as the format for our time together. You can also access the readings and prayers on the app of the same name.



To download this free app, go to <http://bit.ly/AnabaptistPrayerApp>.

The rhythm of praising, listening and responding is modeled in this form of communal prayer. **We invite you to set this intentional time to be in**

**the presence of God with others from across our Conference as we live, work and discern together.** You can learn more about this opportunity on the latest episode of the Ohio Conference Cast. (See <http://bit.ly/OhioConferenceCast>.)

We hope you will join us.

— Paula Synder Belousek, Pastor and Ministry Development Team Chair and Sherah-Leigh Gerber, Regional Pastor

Note: For login information for these prayer times, see the Ohio Conference website: <https://bit.ly/OCPrayers>. ■

CONFERENCE MINISTER MUSINGS

# Discerning God's will together

By Dick Barrett

Conference Minister

**Therefore, I urge**

**you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.**

**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. — Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)**

Ever since becoming a Christian as an adult, Romans chapter 12 has been my favorite chapter in the Bible. For me, it seems to capture in one brief chapter what the entire Christian life is supposed to look like. In that way it is similar to Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*, Matthew chapters 5 through 7. There are many similarities in what is highlighted, especially the call to nonviolence and peace: *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible and as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone* (Romans 12:17-18). Wow! What a high calling. It is certainly one we cannot live out on our own, without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just as impossible as it is to live out God's calling expressed by

the Apostle Paul in the later parts of Romans 12 without the power of the Holy Spirit, the same is true for discerning God's will expressed in the beginning. Discovering God's will, *his good, pleasing and perfect will*, comes only after the sacrifice, the laying down, of our own human and imperfect wills. And it comes only with continual spiritual transformation by the renewing of our minds.

As difficult as it is to discern God's will for our lives as individuals, it becomes exponentially even more difficult when we try to discern God's will together as a body of Christ — as a congregation, as a conference of congregations, and/or as a denomination.

Discerning God's will is a spiritual discipline. While there are many definitions for Christian biblical discernment, the one that our consultant, Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, has been sharing, by Mennonite educator Michael King, seems to capture it best: "Christian discernment involves the community of believers gathering in Jesus' name around Scripture to find its way through...." Christian biblical discernment requires believers gathered in Jesus' name, around Scripture, and the power of the Holy Spirit, to test and approve what God's will is. Paul tells us to "no longer be conformed to the pattern of this world." I think Paul should have used the plural since there are so many patterns of this world we can



be conformed to. Sometimes it is patterns of this world that we are making decisions about and sometimes it is patterns of this world that have infiltrated the discernment process itself. We need to be constantly checking to see in what areas we have conformed to the patterns of this world.

Ohio Conference's year of review is synonymous with a year of discernment. We are seeking God's will together for the future of Ohio Conference. The decisions we will be making as part of the discernment process are important decisions. In order to make the wisest decisions possible, we need feedback from as many of our constituents as possible (credentialed ministers, delegates, etc.), as well as time. We need time to seek God's will through engaging in spiritual disciplines such as "dwelling in God's Word" (reading Scripture together), prayer, fasting,

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*"Discovering God's will, his good, pleasing and perfect will, comes only after the sacrifice, the laying down, of our own human and imperfect wills."*



# Women's leadership conference planned

Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Women USA are planning a women's leadership conference Sept. 29-Oct. 2, 2022, in Elkhart, Indiana. The theme of this gathering will be "Leaders Inspiring Leaders." Conference events will take place at the Mennonite Church USA offices and on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

African American women will lead the conference through prophetic witness and holistic healing. Utilizing Mennonite Women USA's Sisterhood Masterclass and Sister Care Seminar, participants will address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion while experiencing Christ together in fellowship and worship.



**MENNONITE  
WOMEN USA**



**Mennonite  
Mission  
Network**



For more information about this conference, please see <https://bit.ly/2022WomenofFaithConf>.

Register online at <https://bit.ly/2022LeadersInspiringLeaders>. ■

## Discerning God's will together

Continued from page 4

solitude, silence, contemplation, etc.

Discernment literally means "to separate, to discriminate, to determine, to decide or to distinguish between two things." But other than a final step of assessing or re-assessing, making the decisions comes at the end of a discernment process. Prior to the decision-making stage is the gathering and access of information stage, followed by the identifying options stage. In her outstanding book *Pursuing God's Will Together*, Ruth Haley Barton writes, "An im-

portant element of discernment is the ability to ask good questions and to allow those questions to help us gather data and gain perspective. These are not questions that will get us the answers we want; rather they are questions that will elicit the deeper wisdom we need."

As a Conference of Mennonite churches across Ohio and the borders of Pennsylvania and Michigan, we are currently in the gathering and access of information stage and the beginning to identify options stage of our discernment process. My

prayer is that I myself, and all of us, will continue to be patient in the process. We owe that to the God who is the most patient to us.

*Lord, we believe our life together is touched by you,*

*that you want something for us together and of us.*

*Give us ears to hear you, eyes to see you,*

*and hearts quickened by the motions of your Spirit.*

— Adapted from Ted Loder's *Guerillas of Grace* ■

# Pastors gather for discernment

Consultant Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi met with credentialed pastors for a time of discernment. For more photos from this meeting, see <https://bit.ly/Aug23Pastor-Gathering>. Photo by Sherah-Leigh Gerber.



**By Dick Barrett  
Conference Minister**

On Aug. 23 Ohio Conference hosted a gathering of our active credentialed ministers at the Upper Sandusky Public Library. Forty-four ministers were able to attend the one-day retreat, which was facilitated by our consultant, Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi, as part of our one-year review process.

With the primary focus on discerning God's future vision for Ohio Conference based on our new mission statement to *Gather, Equip and Send our Congregations by the power of the Holy Spirit to live out God's Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:29-31) and Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)*, the day also included time for feedback about what our ministers appreciate most about Ohio Conference. Also included were an Emmaus Walk where each minister paired with another to walk and talk about how God might be speaking to us during

this time period, and a time for generating and considering future options for affiliation(s).

As with all of our recent pastor gatherings, it was a day of good fellowship and hard work as we sought God's leading together. Many expressed a strong sense of the Holy Spirit's presence throughout the day.

Seeking feedback from our credentialed ministers was the second major step in the first stage of our review process. The first step was Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi facilitating a retreat day for the Leadership Team and pastoral staff on April 28. The third step of receiving initial feedback from our primary constituents will take place when Jeanne facilitates our upcoming regional delegate gatherings during the last two weeks in September. (A virtual delegate gathering on Zoom is scheduled on Oct. 4 for those who cannot attend the gathering in their region in person.)

Delegates are the primary communicators between Ohio Conference and our congregations, so your voice is very important. In this season of review and discernment, your participation is even more important, so we want to encourage congregations to appoint delegates who will be able to participate at our fall regional delegate gatherings, our winter regional delegate gatherings at the end of January, and our Annual Conference Assembly on March 3-4, 2023, at Central Christian School in Kidron.

Finally, here is a reminder for each of our congregations: Please send the names of your delegates to Judy King at the conference office, [ohmc@zoominternet.net](mailto:ohmc@zoominternet.net), and make sure your delegates register for the upcoming delegate gatherings. To register, go to <https://bit.ly/2022FallClusterMeetings>.

**"As with all of our recent pastor gatherings, it was a day of good fellowship and hard work as we sought God's leading together."**

# Grounding our healing journey in grace

Let us begin to heal.

**Read Proverbs 3:1-7, noting especially verse 5a: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”**

We are in community with each other. Many of us are hurting. Can we come together and promote healing? Maybe you don't see it. Maybe you don't feel it. But when you listen deeply, the dissonance is unmistakable. There is hurt and pain permeating the fabric of our families, our neighborhoods, our schools, our workplaces, and our communities.

A group has formed to move us forward on this journey. Grace & Groundings, an Ohio Conference resource team, will learn, act, reflect, and model topics around racial reconciliation. Help us develop a framework that will assist the enhancement of your walk with Jesus Christ.

— Together we will learn and become aware of the source of the hurt.

— Then, as a community, we will discuss actions that everyone can do.



— Finally, we will be able to reflect and look at ourselves, make some adjustments and see if the pain has eased.

Jesus gave all of himself to give us this opportunity to ground our faithfulness in God's grace. We beseech you to join us on this journey into a healing space — a place where we can be the community, that shining light on a hill, that will attract others into a practice of love and loving.

Will you come?

—From the Grace & Groundings Group

*Editor's note: Grace & Groundings will be a regular column in Ohio*

*Mennonite Evangel. There will be upcoming opportunities to join this group in learning, acting, and reflecting.*

*This resource team has six members:*

- Greg Battle, Lee Heights Community Church
- Greg Bowman, Midway Mennonite Church
- Kevin Himes, Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron
- Vikki Pruitte-Sorrels, Lee Heights Community Church
- Doug Zehr, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville
- Alysa Short, coordinator of volunteers, Central Mennonite Church ■

**Many of us are hurting. Can we come together and promote healing?**

## Webinar to explain health care plan

**Did you know that Mennonite Church USA has a health plan?** The Corinthian Plan provides health coverage

for eligible pastors, church employees and their families. Learn more about the Corinthian Plan during an upcoming webinar on

Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. ET. Current participants of the plan are also welcome to ask questions. To register, go to <https://bit.ly/Sept20CorinthianPlan>. ■



## MEDA event to highlight work in Haiti

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) invites you to learn more about MEDA's work of economic development in Haiti. On Tuesday, Sept. 13, the Northeast Ohio Hub of MEDA will host a gathering from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Venture Heritage Farm, 13777 Arnold Road, Dalton, Ohio.

The event will include authentic Haitian hors d'oeuvres and up-

dates from the field with MEDA's Haiti project manager, Claude Clodomir. Claude is a Haitian native and passionate about the work MEDA is doing to create jobs and alleviate poverty through business in his country.

Hors d'oeuvres will be provided at no cost, but donations will be accepted for MEDA. To learn more or to register for this event, go to <https://bit.ly/MEDASept13>. ■



Claude Clodomir

## Women's Retreat planned for October

"Light of the World," based on Matthew 5:14-16, will be the theme of the annual Women's Retreat at Camp Luz in Kidron on Oct. 14-15.

Although the final input session will take place Saturday afternoon, retreat participants also will have the option to stay at the camp overnight until Sunday morning, Oct. 16.

Speaker for this year's retreat will be Sarah Short of Archbold. She has served as part of the pastoral team at Inlet Mennon-

ite Church in Wauseon, and she currently is filling the pulpit for pastors who need a Sunday off. She has studied at Winebrenner Seminary and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

In addition to input sessions with Sarah Short, this year the Women's Retreat will include activities and quiet time for reflection. Meals will be provided.

To register, go to the Camp Luz website: [https://](https://www.camppluz.com/womens-retreat.html)



Sarah Short

[www.camppluz.com/womens-retreat.html](https://www.camppluz.com/womens-retreat.html). ■

## Peace Center to offer 'Restorative Conversations'

**Coming in 2023:** Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will be offering a new one-day workshop called "Restorative Conversations: Storytelling, Healing and Community Building."

This one-day workshop will introduce church leaders to the key concepts of circle process-

es and ways in which circles can be used within their congregations. Restorative conversations are useful when working through difficult or polarizing topics, processing shared painful experiences, building community, and dealing with certain levels of conflict in the church setting.

Three sessions of this workshop have been scheduled for next year: Feb. 23, May 23, and Nov. 2, 2023. Please contact the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (630-627-0507 or [Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org](mailto:Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org)) with questions about this workshop. ■



## ABOUT PEOPLE

### Everence

KIDRON, Ohio — Four students from Ohio Conference congregations received \$1,000 Everence Financial® scholarships to pursue their college degrees.

**Danielle King** of Wauseon attends Bluffton University. Her home congregation is Tedrow Mennonite Church.



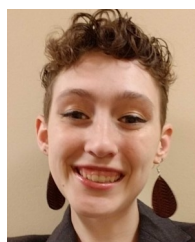
**Joel Kornhaus** of Fredericksburg attends Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. His home congregation is Martins Mennonite Church in Orrville.



**Kara Kornhaus** of Fredericksburg attends Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her home congregation is Martins Mennonite Church in Orrville.



**Alyssa Nolt** of Dalton attends Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her home congregation is Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron.



Everence awarded 45 college scholarships for the 2022-2023

academic year. The scholarship program encourages students to explore the integration of faith and finances while helping them on their educational journeys.

Recipients were chosen based on participation and leadership in school-related and community activities, along with responses to an essay question.

One student received a \$3,000 scholarship, two received \$2,000 scholarships and 42 others received \$1,000 scholarships for the coming school year. Visit [everence.com](https://www.everence.com) for a complete list of 2022-2023 scholarship recipients and their photos. ■

### Pastoral notes



Mel Hathaway has retired as pastor of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron after 13 years of shepherding the congregation. The Sonnenberg congregation held an afternoon reception for Mel and his wife, Dottie, on Sunday, July 31.

For their next adventure, Mel and Dottie have been invited to serve as hosts at the SOOP guest house in Phoenix. They plan to leave for Phoenix in early October and return to Ohio in April. ■

Sonnenberg Mennonite Church celebrated the ministry of Mel Hathaway on July 31 upon the event of his retirement.

## Conference Calendar

### SEPT

- 6 Mentor/Mentee Retreat for Pastors, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin
- 14 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 20 Fall Delegate Gathering, Oak Grove Mennonite, Smithville
- 21 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 22 Fall Delegate Gathering, Beech Mennonite, Louisville
- 27 Fall Delegate Gathering, West Clinton Mennonite, Wauseon
- 28 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 29 Fall Delegate Gathering, South Union Mennonite, West Liberty

### OCT

- 4 Fall Delegate Gathering, online via Zoom
- 5 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 12 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 13 Ministry Development Team Meeting, Upper Sandusky Community Library
- 14-16 Women's Retreat, Camp Luz, Kidron
- 19 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 26 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom

### NOV

- 2 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 4-6 Pastors' Wives Retreat, St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin
- 9 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 16 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom
- 23 Ohio Conference at Prayer, online via Zoom

am Zehr will be the speaker for this retreat, which will explore the theme "Joy in the Journey."

For more details or to register, see <https://bit.ly/JoyintheJourneyRetreat>. Register by Oct. 7.

**Eastern Mennonite University has been awarded a grant of \$998,606** from Lilly Endowment Inc. to support Eastern Mennonite Seminary's development of a new interdisciplinary pastoral leadership institute that will offer workshops, courses and trainings on conflict transformation. The institute opens this fall. For more information about this grant, see the EMU website: <https://bit.ly/ConflictTransformationGrant>.

**Darrin Snyder Belousek**, a member of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, shares thoughts about the words we use in worship in a recent "Menno Snapshots" column on the Mennonite Church USA website. Read his column at <https://bit.ly/WordsforWorshipColumn>.



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

## Back page briefings...

**Ohio Conference will hold a retreat for wives of Ohio Conference pas-**

**tors** on Nov. 4-6, 2022, at the St. Francis Spirituality Center in Tiffin, Ohio. Miri-