

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

NOV/DEC 2023



ohiomennoniteconference.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Resource corner
Winter Read
- 6 Annual
Conference
Assembly
- 7 Executive Board
meets in
Cleveland
- 8 Tiny, awkward
little steps
- 9 Peace witness
with the help of
an anvil
- 11 About people
- 12 Back page
briefings

Community gun safety event brings Ohio churches together

In September, several Mennonite churches from Northwest Ohio worked together to host a community event about gun safety. Several organizations, such as RAWtools and Mennonite Central Committee, also helped make this event successful.

By Nancy Roynon Beck
Have you ever wanted to make something happen but did not know how? That was me last January. I was teaching the Mennonite Central Committee curriculum FEAR

Continued on page 3



Joel Shenk helps an attendee forge gun pieces into something new. Photo by Nancy and Neal Beck.

Downsizing Summit Mennonite

By Joanne Lehman
Many couples and individuals come to a place in life where downsizing is desired. Their situation has changed, and their living space is too big. Family members have moved out to begin life somewhere else. Mainte-



In its new rented space, the Summit Mennonite congregation uses the banners and cross from the old building to make the new space feel like home.

Continued on page 4

RESOURCE CORNER

Advent at Home guide available soon

By Ann Leaman
Ohio Conference
Resource Advocate

Coming soon: Once again this year, Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) will be publishing an Advent at Home worship guide. It will follow the same Advent theme as *Leader* magazine, “How will we know?”

The Advent at Home guide is intended for use through the weeks of Advent, which begins Dec. 3, and continuing through Epiphany. It will

include scriptures, prayers, worship rituals, suggested activities and contextual information.

MEA says the guide should be available for free download in English and Spanish around Nov. 13. It will be available on the Mennonite Education Agency website: www.mennoniteeducation.org/resources/advent-at-home.

COMMONWORD

Another online source for Advent resources is Com-



monWord, which is a collaboration of Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University. CommonWord has compiled a curated list of worship, drama, family, and other resources for Advent. To view these resources, go to <https://www.commonword.ca/go/2190>. ■

VOL. LXXVII, NO. 6

NOV/DEC 2023

Editor: Ann H. Leaman

Ohio Mennonite Evangel is published six times per year by the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA, Box 210, Kidron OH 44636, telephone (330) 857-5421.

All material for publication should be submitted to the editor at 5854 Sunland St. NE, Louisville OH 44641, or via telephone: 330-453-0150, or e-mail: ohioevangel@gmail.com, one month prior to desired publication date.

Ohio Mennonite Evangel is distributed to all households of Ohio Conference congregations, other interested individuals and church agencies.

Send subscription information and email address changes to the editor at ohioevangel@gmail.com.

Winter Read to focus on mental health

Coming in January: The Ohio Conference Winter Read. This winter Ohio Conference will once again hold a Conference-wide book study using the Zoom videoconferencing

platform. We will be studying the book *Not Quite Fine: Mental Health, Faith and Showing Up for One Another* by Carlene Hill Byron. A schedule of Zoom meetings

will be published in December, as well as registration information. This book is available from the Mennonite Media website: <https://bit.ly/NotQuiteFine>. ■

Personnel of the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Moderator: Ken Sims — simsken6@gmail.com
Assistant Moderator: Paula Snyder Belousek — pastor@salemmennonite.com
Credentialing Representative to Leadership Team: Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach — rachele@millersburgmennonite.org
Gifts Discernment Ministry Chair: Matt Weaver — matt.lockport@gmail.com
Stewardship Ministry Chair: Andrew Blount — blountandrew@hotmail.com
Credentialing Ministry Chair: Doug King — doug@tedrowmennonite.org
Interim Conference Minister: Dan Miller — ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com
Regional Pastor: Tony Doehrmann — ocrpwest@gmail.com
Interim Regional Pastor: Larry Rohrer — ohiorpeast@gmail.com
Administrative Secretary: Judy King — ohmc@zoominternet.net
Finance Coordinator: Stan Helmuth — cboh1@zoominternet.net
Conference Editor: Ann Leaman — ohioevangel@gmail.com
Coordinator of Volunteers: Alys Short — alysashort@gmail.com

Gun safety event

Continued from page 1

NOT: Creating a plan to respond to active violence as a Sunday school class. We had great discussions regarding gun violence, safety, mass shootings and active shooter drills in classrooms. It seemed imperative that we work against this violence and help heal the wounds created by guns. Having already known about **RAWtools** and Michael Martin, having seen their work at the anvil and having experienced beating on a gun barrel at a forge, I wanted more people in Northwest Ohio to have this experience.

After speaking with Michael, Jes Buller from MCC and Allen Rutter from Shalom Counseling and Mediation Center in Archbold, Ohio, I shared my thoughts with Sue Short, pastor at **Zion Mennonite Church**. She suggested that I ask the Mennonite churches in the area to put an announcement in their bulletins to look for volunteers for a committee. Heather Myers from **Tedrow Mennonite Church** and Brittany Spotts from **Lockport Mennonite Church** volunteered. Michael referred us to Joel Shenk from **Toledo Mennonite Church** to do the forge work in Michael's place, and Joel agreed.

What began as a community event to share concerns and stories centered on the misuse of firearms turned into a bigger conversation on community and gun safety.



What started as something I wanted to see, turned into a collaborative, multi-church event, led by a small group of concerned people. A request to the Ohio Conference for a **Ministry Grant** yielded the financial help we needed.

The local sheriff's office was invited to send a representative. He was willing to come if this was not an "anti-gun" event. This type of event would become political. It became apparent that, in an area of high gun ownership, gun safety was a better focus. And it was critical to us that people learned more about how guns are used as a means for suicide, as well as about gun accidents in the home and safe storage education.

On Sept. 24, "Disarming Violence: Starting a Conversation about Gun Safety in our Community," was held in the **Central Mennonite Church** parking lot. God granted us a beautiful fall afternoon for the family-centered event. There was food, information tables, blacksmithing at the forge, a time for kid's activities,

and there was time to listen to representatives from area agencies.

While folks enjoyed entrées from the food truck, kettle corn provided by the Dinius family and ice-cold slushies, Joel Shenk staffed the forge. He explained the preparation involved in turning the gun barrel into a garden tool. Attendees took turns at the forge, beating on the hot metal. We completed one tool and worked on several others.

Jes Buller led the kid's activities, helping the children understand more about perspectives and how we do not all see things the same way. She also spoke to the entire group about the work of peacemaking.

Wendy Jennings represented NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and shared about the ripple effect of trauma. Any trauma or violent event, any suicide or gun-related injury or death, affects many more than just the person to whom it happened.

Booths were available for more information on local and national organizations. Photo by Nancy and Neal Beck.

"It was critical to us that people learned more about how guns are used as a means for suicide, as well as about gun accidents in the home and safe storage education."

Continued on page 4

Summit Mennonite

Continued from page 1

The building in Barberton formerly owned by Summit Mennonite Church now houses Barberton Area Community Ministries (BACM).



nance is too expensive for the budget. Closets and cupboards are full of things they've collected over the years. Life goes on, but it's time to let go of stuff and live more simply.

This has been the experience of Summit Mennonite, a church family born in 1965 when 15 people formed Summit Chris-

tian Fellowship. The congregation met elsewhere, and eventually built a home at 939 Norton Avenue in the city of Barberton, on the outskirts of Akron, Ohio. At the new location, they changed their name to Summit Mennonite Church. There, they ministered to the local community, the people of Barberton and others, and to those who came to study or work in nearby urban areas. The group's rich history was celebrated at milestones along the way.

Continued on page 5

Gun safety event

Continued from page 3

Jes Stoltzfus Buller of MCC speaks to attendees of the Disarming Violence event in Northwest Ohio. Photo by Nancy and Neal Beck.



Deputy Smithmeyer from the Fulton County Sheriff's Office spoke about the importance of gun safety and safe storage. He provided cable locks for guns, free of charge.

Tonie Long from the Four County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services board, shared statistics and stories relating to the relationship between guns and death by suicide. She said that there are usually 15 minutes between the time a person decides to take

their own life and the attempt. If a gun is locked or in a safe, that may save their life.

Allen Rutter from Shalom gave meaningful information on recognizing signs of suicide and what to do. It was also pointed out that these local organizations work together to build a safer, healthier community.

Our group watched in amazement, as nearly 100 people attended all or part of the event. The fruit of our planning around the table had turned

into a larger conversation that others were also interested in having. Hosting an event like this isn't going to change the world, but it just might change one person's life. And that can make all the difference.

Nancy Roynon Beck, attracted to the pacifist stance, chose the Mennonite church with her late husband. She is a retired nurse, and she enjoys spending time with her new husband and their combined 21 grandchildren. She limits her volunteering to allow for exercising, dirt therapy, trying new recipes, and recently, she resumed piecing and quilting.

This article was originally shared online as part of Mennonite Church USA's [Learn, Pray, Join: End Gun Violence](#) initiative and is republished with permission. To see the article on the Mennonite Church USA website, go to <https://bit.ly/DisarmingViolence>. ■

Summit Mennonite

Continued from page 4

The congregation welcomed diversity and cared for all who came. Early on, they were known for their acceptance of female leaders. Summit Mennonite opened its building to various community groups who needed a meeting place. In 2012, Barberton Area Community Ministries (BACM) moved their offices to Summit's building and began to provide food for the area's needy families. This separate organization was run by volunteers from many area churches.

Unused Sunday school rooms were given over to BACM as they needed offices and storage space for their growing community ministry. Meanwhile, Summit Mennonite adjusted to worship by Zoom during the pandemic, the resignation of a pastor, and the loss of several retired couples who moved away. While BACM was growing and serving more families each week, Summit Mennonite was shrinking in numbers. BACM needed more space and shared their dreams of opening additional offices to provide links to services that could benefit the families they served.

In 2021, guided in part by their interim pastors, Patrick and Christine Nafziger, the congregation hired a facilitator who took them through a discernment process. During this time, the group also assessed their ongoing expenses, the need for continuing upgrades to the building and grounds, how to accommodate BACM's growing program, and what to do about future leadership of the congregation.



A core group remained committed to worshipping together despite the challenge of hiring a pastor for such a small congregation. BACM, who by then had been searching for a new location, offered to purchase the building. The organization will continue cultivation of the community garden started by Summit.

By now, Summit's active membership had shrunk to a couple dozen people, but the discernment process confirmed their commitment to remain together rather than disband. A summary of this sentiment might be the sticky note one person put on the facilitator's wall chart. "We like each other." During the discernment process, the group reaffirmed their core values as stated below:

Jesus Followers: We follow

God's model of peace, actively seeking God's loving justice in our life together as a congregation, in our community, and throughout all of creation.

Welcoming and Affirming: God calls us to invite and affirm people of any race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, age, economic status, or life situation into full participation in any aspect of the congregation.

Supportive Community: We live as a family of equals in our access to the Holy Spirit as we listen to and support one another spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

In retrospect, it appears that by separating the issue of selling the building from the issue of congregational viability, the

Henry Beun shared with Summit Mennonite recently with an object lesson about pruning vines.

"In retrospect, it appears that by separating the issue of selling the building from the issue of congregational viability, the group could envision themselves as a congregation free to move out and move on."

Continued on page 6

Summit Mennonite

Continued from page 5

A recent Sunday morning at Summit Mennonite included a time of personal study and sharing using Lectio Divina. The congregation meets in the fellowship hall of Grace UCC of Loyal Oak. To see more Summit Mennonite Church photos, go to <https://bit.ly/Downsizing-Summit>.



group could envision themselves as a congregation free to move out and move on. After discernment, there came a time of sorting and disposing of unneeded material things. They offered their unneeded belongings to people who would appreciate them. Some things were sold, others were reserved for future use — banners, a wooden cross, the peace lamp, a podium, a few hymnbooks, and a storage cabinet.

Summit Mennonite has been blessed with a lovely new meeting space in the fellowship room of Grace United Church of Christ of Loyal Oak, located two miles from their former location. In that rented space, the church gathers in front of its signature banners and wooden cross each Sunday morning. After worship services, the two congregations join for coffee and snacks. Rather than hire a pastor, Summit currently relies on lay leadership and supply pastors. Commissions, commit-

tees, and church council have been disbanded in favor of a simpler church constitution.

The group holds regular meetings to receive financial reports and other business and has a monthly potluck. Worship takes various forms including traditional sermons, discussions, teaching, and hymn sing Sundays. Summit continues to nurture Christian faith and offer fellowship to all who come to sit in their welcoming circle.

Summit Mennonite currently meets at 3285 Cleveland Massillon Road, Norton, Ohio. You can contact them at summit2mennonite@gmail.com. The church website is www.summitmennonite.org. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Following Jesus Together with a Common Mission

with input by
Meghan Good

Philippians 2.5-11

Ohio Conference Annual Conference Assembly March 1-2, 2024

**Sharon Mennonite Church
Plain City, Ohio**

This event is for
EVERYONE in the
congregation!

ACA will begin on Friday
MORNING and conclude on
Saturday afternoon.

This event is open to EVERYONE, not just delegates. Meghan will be presenting on her upcoming book *Divine Gravity: Sparking a Movement to Recover a Better Christian Story*. Plan now to attend! Registration information will be available in January.

Ohio Conference Leadership Team welcomes MC USA Executive Board to Ohio

MC USA Executive Board meets in Cleveland



At left: MC USA Executive Board members in Cleveland, Ohio, Oct. 19, 2023. (Front row, left to right) Marty Lehman, Linda Dibble, Margie Mejia-Caraballo, Susan Hart (Second row) Mitch Kingsley, Phil Helmuth, Karen Zehr (Third row) Lesley Francisco McClendon, Todd Lehman, Rosetta Landis (Fourth row) Jon Carlson, Thomas Dunn and Emily Merolli. (Not pictured: Richard Aguirre, Chaiya Hadtasunsern and Jerrell Williams). Photo by Camille Dager.

By Camille Dager

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Mennonite Church USA) — The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board strengthened key relationships and discussed creative strategies for convention and revitalization at the first Executive Board meeting of the biennium Oct. 18-20, 2023, in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ohio Mennonite Conference welcomed the Executive Board and staff, as well as attending CEOs from [Everence](#), [MennoMedia](#), [Mennonite Education Agency](#), [Mennonite Mission Network](#), and [MHS Association](#), with Ohio-themed gift bags and a catered lunch at the Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Hotel. Denominational leaders networked with OMC's Ken Sims, moderator; Paula Snyder Belousek, assistant moderator; Andrew Blount, Stewardship Ministry chair; and Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach,

Credentialing Ministry representative, during lunch.

"Community is the center of our life together, so I'm always thankful for opportunities to establish and strengthen relationships throughout every part of MC USA," said MC USA Moderator Jon Carlson, about connecting with OMC leaders.

REIMAGINING CONVENTION

In response to [delegate action](#) calling for togetherness, the Executive Board began planning for MC USA's 2025 biennial convention, reimagining it as a more intimate gathering focused on the biennial theme, Follow Jesus.

MC USA Executive Director Glen Guyton presented a report on the MennoCon23 convention. More than 1,400 people attended the convention in Kansas City, Missouri, in July 2023. Demographic shifts in-

cluded an increase in the percentage of [BIPOC](#) attendees (14% of total) but a decrease in the percentage of youth. Children and youth represented 37% of attendees. In post-convention surveys, 97% of respondents rated the event positively, with speakers, worship and seminars ranked most favorably.

The event yielded a net deficit of \$235,000, even though MC USA staff reduced convention costs by more than 10% over initial projections.

Proposed changes for MC USA's 2025 convention include contracting with more cost-effective venues, reducing production costs, tightening up the convention schedule and raising participant registration fees.

For a full report of the MC USA Executive Board meeting, see <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/news/executive-board-strengthens>. ■

At right: Ohio Mennonite Conference leaders (from left to right) Paula Snyder Belousek, Ken Sims, Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach and Andrew Blount. Photo by Camille Dager.

Engaging with mental illness as a congregation

Tiny, awkward little steps

Maple Grove Mennonite Church replaced their back pews with round tables, which hold coloring books, puzzles, and fidgets for congregants to use during Sunday morning worship.



By Nathanael Hofstetter Ressler
Maple Grove Mennonite Church
Hartville, Ohio

Realities exist in life that are daunting to consider, much less to know what to do about them. These realities loom over us in their enormity, and we seem to shrink into their shadows. How could I possibly do anything to address that?!

I have started drawing recently and, friends, I am not good at it. At first, I was clumsy, limited in technique, unable to make my vision a reality and overall, very not good. However, I am proud to say that today I am clumsy, limited in technique, unable to make my vision a reality, but only just not good. How did I go from "very not good" to "only just not good?" Tiny, little awkward steps.

I've been the pastor of our church for three years. During that time, I was diagnosed with ADHD. The diagnosis was a helpful affirmation to a long suspicion of mine. Engaging

mental health has long been my desire; my diagnosis was a further catalyst for that desire. Honestly though, as I thought of the realities of mental health in my context, I felt overwhelmed. I thought: How could I possibly do anything to address that?

One particularly helpful resource from Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) was *The Mental Health Resource Guide for Congregations*. This orienting document served as a good starting place and a way to bring things into perspective rather than trying to address everything at once. In our congregational setting, we began with a series of tiny, awkward steps.

Just start the conversation.

I did this from the pulpit on a Sunday morning. I talked about my ADHD diagnosis. It was a little awkward, and I probably didn't do it optimally. However, it helped begin the conversation. The fear of wanting to do it perfectly or needing to have it be completely understood (I am speaking to myself) can keep us from the conversation.

Modify the physical space.

We took a few back pews out of our sanctuary and put round tables in their place. Some folks, neurodivergent or otherwise, are not terribly comfortable in pews. We put some quiet fidgets and coloring books on the tables. I have been told by multiple people that this has helped them immensely in their ability to fully participate in the service.

Getting some training. Our congregation is hosting a Mental Health First Aid Training with the organization Mental Health First Aid Collaborative. This is being offered free to our congregation and community. We hope this will be another way for our body to be more holistically equipped to provide mental health care and support.

I am deeply grateful for the support and resources I have received from ADN. Some folks in our congregation still don't "get it," and many times we don't quite get it right. However, the journey toward being a congregation that is a safe and caring place around mental health is filled with thousands of tiny, little awkward steps.

This article originally was shared on the website of Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN). Used with permission from ADN. To see the article on the ADN website, go to <https://bit.ly/ADN-MentalHealth>. The ADN website has a wide variety of resources: www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org. ■

"I am deeply grateful for the support and resources I have received from ADN (Anabaptist Disabilities Network)."

Toledo pastor provides peace witness with the help of an anvil

Joel Shenk, pastor of Toledo Mennonite Church, describes how he learned blacksmithing as part of his personal peace witness and how Ohio Conference and his congregation have joined him in this work.

Camille Dager, chief communication officer for Mennonite Church USA (MC USA), recently talked to Joel Shenk about his peace witness in response to growing gun violence in the U.S. Below is their conversation:

Q: How has gun violence impacted you?

Pastor Joel: It hasn't impacted me directly. What has impacted me is seeing the gun violence in our society, militarized law enforcement, gang violence, police shootings, suicides and mass shootings at schools. Back in 2016, some of us at Toledo Mennonite Church started asking if there is anything that we, as a church, could do. That's when we got started with RAWtools.

[RAWtools is an MC USA-affiliated ministry, focused on moving communities away from violence by making garden tools from guns, as well as helping teach new ways to solve problems through relationships, dialogue and alternative means of justice.]

Q: I understand you are a blacksmith. Tell me about this.

Pastor Joel: Several of us in Toledo got together and invited



Mike Martin [of RAWtools] and his father, Fred, to come and do a demonstration. At that event, we made some good connections that led to a conversation with a local blacksmith, Dane Turpening of [Toledo Twisted Iron](#). He and I worked together for a little bit, and I learned the basics. It's not hard to learn, but it's hard to get good at!

The tools are basic, but not everyone has an anvil and a forge. Otherwise, you're working with hammers and tongs. My parents owned a hardware store when I was growing up, so I grew up around various tools.

I also took a blacksmithing class and a welding class through

the [Toledo Museum of Art](#) during my last sabbatical, three years ago, and I went out for a week to visit Mike and Fred [Martin] and worked in their shop.

[Toledo Mennonite Church now has a portable anvil and forge. Toledo Mennonite Church is part of the RAWtools Disarming Network, a network of locations across the U.S. that can help people disable their guns legally and safely.]

Q: How does your Anabaptist faith inform your response to gun violence?

Pastor Joel: I was raised in the Mennonite tradition, which

Continued on page 10

Pastor Joel Shenk uses Toledo Mennonite Church's forge to turn guns into garden tools.

"Back in 2016, some of us at Toledo Mennonite Church started asking if there is anything that we, as a church, could do (about gun violence). That's when we got started with RAWtools."

Peace witness

Continued from page 9

taught me the ways of nonviolence and peacebuilding. In 1 Peter 3:11, Peter quotes from Psalm 34 and says, “seek peace and pursue it.” Jesus taught us to love our enemy and said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Isaiah and Micah talked about turning swords into plowshares. It’s that biblical witness from the Old Testament to the New Testament and Jesus. That’s the narrative that I want to live into, that I want to try to embody and pursue.

Q: How has the congregation at Toledo Mennonite Church supported this work?

Pastor Joel: They’ve supported it in principle and concept, financially, by providing space and by volunteering ... I would say that it helped us, as a congregation, go from a mere abstract commitment to peace and nonviolence to being able to do something tangible.

Q: How have others responded to this work?

Pastor Joel: At one event, a local judge who works in the juvenile justice system brought a couple of young men who had gun charges against them ... At the [guns-to-garden-tools] event, they had to grapple with their choices, after seeing this powerful, symbolic demonstration. She told me later that they said it made them think about it.

At another event, in a different town, our event was billed as a conversation about gun rights. During the panel discussion, part of the group was getting upset, crossing their arms and arguing about specific points. Afterward, they didn’t necessarily know what to think of the fact that I was turning a gun into a garden tool, but these men — some of whom were machinists and farmers — liked the skill, the mechanics, the blacksmithing part of it. I felt like this was a time when it really was a disarming event — disarming not only guns, but hearts and minds.

Q: What insights might you have for other congregations/ministries interested in engaging in this issue?

Pastor Joel: I would say, keep in mind the “mustard seed” concept [a reference to Matthew 17:20-21] — it doesn’t have to be big. It doesn’t have to be grand. It doesn’t even need to have an impact. It’s about faith. It’s about witness. It may or may not move the needle, in terms of the public policy or cultural dynamics, but so be it. We’re not necessarily called to be effective; we’re called to be faithful. There’s a lot of faithful ways to get involved or to be a witness. It could be planting a garden that’s a tribute to those who were lost to gun violence this year. The less digital and the more actual that you can make it, the

better. Instead of a social media post, try to do something tangible and active with your hands, feet and body in a physical space in the community. I think that’s a good thing. That’s the kind of thing I’m interested in.

Q: What’s next?

Pastor Joel: The Ohio Mennonite Conference Ministry Development Team recently gave Toledo Mennonite Church a grant, which will go toward creating a fully functional permanent blacksmithing workshop. This will, hopefully, kickstart some more activity for us.

I’d love for us to have a Sunday school class during which people go out after church and use the forge. I’d love to have social events in which people come and work on an art piece, but we need the physical space to do it.

Joel Shenk is pastor of Toledo Mennonite Church, where he has served since 2010. He graduated from Hesston College, Eastern Mennonite University and Fuller Theological Seminary. He is an avid fly fisher, an aspiring gardener and an amateur blacksmith. He, his wife and two daughters live in Toledo.

This article was originally shared online as part of Mennonite Church USA’s [Learn, Pray, Join: End Gun Violence](#) initiative and is republished with permission. To see the article on the Mennonite Church USA website, go to <https://bit.ly/BlacksmithingPeaceWitness>.



“There’s a lot of faithful ways to get involved or to be a witness.... The less digital and the more actual that you can make it, the better.”

ABOUT PEOPLE

Pastoral notes

John David Thacker was installed as a part of the collaborative ministry team at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold on Oct. 8. During the morning worship service, John David preached his first sermon at Zion since officially joining the collaborative ministry team. The sermon was based on Jonah 2 and 4.

Regional Pastor Tony Doehrmann led the installation ceremony, which included a time of prayer during which the congregation's elders and Pastor Sue Short laid hands on John David. ■



John David Thacker has joined Zion Mennonite Church's collaborative ministry team (CMT). Pictured from right to left: Sue Short (CMT pastor), Suz Wirick (elder), Mike Zimmerman (elder chair), John David Thacker, Regional Pastor Tony Doehrmann, Barb Yoder (elder), and Greg Nofziger (elder). Photo by Anita Roth.

Gary Stuckey was installed as associate pastor at Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker on Sunday, Sept. 24, during the morning worship service.

Gary preached the sermon, titled "Seeking God in the Pain," which was based on Genesis 32:22-32.

Regional Pastor Tony Doehrmann led the installation ceremony, which included a time of prayer as leaders from the Lockport congregation laid hands on Gary and his wife, Sandy. ■



On Sunday, Sept. 24, Gary Stuckey was installed as associate pastor of Lockport Mennonite Church in Stryker. As part of the installation ceremony, Regional Pastor Tony Doehrmann (pictured at right) asks Gary Stuckey to respond to several questions. Also pictured is Sandy Stuckey.

Conference Calendar

NOV

10-12 Pastor-Spouse Retreat, Deer Creek State Park Lodge, Mt. Sterling, Ohio

JAN 2024

9 Winter Delegate Cluster Meeting, Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon

11 Winter Delegate Cluster Meeting, Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville

16 Winter Delegate Cluster Meeting, Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman

18 Winter Delegate Cluster Meeting, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty

22 Winter Delegate Cluster Meeting, online via Zoom

FEB

2-3 Women in Leadership Retreat, Lial Event Center, Whitehouse, Ohio

MAR

1-2 Annual Conference Assembly, Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City

diana. The theme of this half-day retreat will be "Living that Matters for Men." Steve Thomas, US coordinator for Mennonite Men, will be the retreat leader. For more information, see the retreat flyer: <https://bit.ly/12-9-23MensRetreatFlyer>. To register, go to bit.ly/pathways_Living_That_Matters.

Did you know that Anabaptist Disabilities Network offers Barrier-Free Grants? These grants provide up to \$500 in matching funds to enhance accessibility through church projects such as playgrounds, ADA restrooms, and hearing assistive devices. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/Barrier-FreeGrants>.

Online registration is open for the Ohio Conference Women in Leadership Retreat planned for Feb. 2-3, 2024, at the Lial Renewal Center in Whitehouse, Ohio. The retreat will feature Jewel Gingerich Longenecker of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, who will focus on the theme "Finding Your Voice." To learn more or to register, go to <https://bit.ly/2024WomeninLeadership>. ■

Back page briefings...

When God calls someone to leadership, a journey begins. Perhaps you are on that journey. Perhaps you are looking for mentors and companions along the way. Ohio Conference invites you to join Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program. This program is for lay leaders, pastors, church planters, and other emerging leaders who are called without specific training for ministry or who are exploring a call to ministry. The

early registration deadline to apply for winter 2024 is Dec. 6, 2023, with the final registration deadline on Jan. 10, 2024. For more information, visit www.ambbs.edu/journey, contact your pastor, or contact the Ohio Conference office at ohmc@zoominternet.net or 330-857-5421.

Mennonite Men will hold a Men's Retreat Saturday, Dec. 9, at Pathways Retreat in Goshen, In-

OHIO MENNONITE
EVANGEL
News & Views of Ohio Conference

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