

# Perspective



[www.ohiomennoniteconference.org](http://www.ohiomennoniteconference.org)

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## Leadership Council gathers for retreat

Ohio Conference's newly formed Leadership Council met at Our Lady of the Pines Retreat Center in Fremont, Ohio, April 24-25 for its first meeting. Gathering around Psalm 23 and Philippians 2:1-11, the days were filled with gratitude, recognition of transitions and challenges, trust, and a sense of God's engagement in Ohio Conference.

Moderator Paula Snyder Belousek led the gathering which included much laughter, fellowship, and joy. The Leadership



Council spent time considering each member's A-P-E-S-T giftings—Apostle Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher—from Ephesians 4:11-13. Giftings of Shepherd and Teacher are prevalent in the Leadership Council. Time was spent questioning how to bring in

more Apostle, Prophet, and Evangelist energy into Conference.

The Leadership Council used Thursday to make initial plans for 2024-2025 based off of the strategic plan created and adopted by delegates at Annual Conference Assembly in March. Members brainstormed and planned together how the goals of the strategic plan could be implemented. This included thinking about individuals from around Conference and how their gifts could be used to continue Conference's work.

The strategic plan belongs to all of Conference as we live into our mission to "Gather, Equip, and Send our congregations by the power of the Holy Spirit to Live out God's Greatest Commandments and Jesus' Great Commission."

The Strategic Plan can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/pqABN>.

***Perspective: 1) The inter-relation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed. 2) Point of view; capacity to view things in their relative importance.***

## Congregational perspective

The newly adopted Ohio Conference Strategic Plan calls for congregational stories to be included in Conference publications throughout the year.

These stories are a way to share with each other, learn from each other, and support each other. Stories may be about successes, failures, or even dreams. If your congregation would be willing to share a story of evangelism or community participation, please contact Alysa Short at

[ohioconferencecommunications@gmail.com](mailto:ohioconferencecommunications@gmail.com) or 419.572.1348.

## Please distribute Perspective copies to:

- Pastor(s)
- Church chairperson
- Youth sponsor(s)
- Delegates
- Duplicate for other church leaders

## Fiscal year closes with a deficit

Ohio Conference's fiscal year closed on March 31, 2024, with a \$47,192 deficit according to figures provided by Financial Coordinator Stan Helmuth. Receipts for the month were \$22,440, a \$14,695 increase over February. Expenses for March were up slightly over February at \$33,298 due to Annual Conference expenditures. The ending yearly deficit is the largest the conference has experienced in recent history. The staff continues to work hard to keep expenses below budget. Delegates affirmed the 2024-2025 spending plan at Annual Conference Assembly in March. This spending plan anticipates contributions of \$250,000 from Ohio Conference congregations along with \$40,000 from individuals.



## SEMILLA Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City

Brothers and sisters of Ohio Conference,

I am reaching out on behalf of the Friends of SEMILLA Board in North America. We support the work of SEMILLA Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City, Guatemala. SEMILLA's original focus in Central America continues to grow and at the same time churches from Cuba and South America increasingly look to SEMILLA for training in bible and ministry. It is worth noting that SEMILLA is not only the seminary but includes a language school, guest house, and learning tours.

I am reaching out to congregations with the hopes of growing connections for SEMILLA. While I will absolutely be interested in learning about ways to grow financial support for SEMILLA, I am also excited to help people make connections to a part of our church body that practices peace and justice in the face of ongoing conflicts and significant economic and social upheaval.

I'm happy to work with congregations, individuals, or groups throughout the summer. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me by email ([rudi.kauffman@gmail.com](mailto:rudi.kauffman@gmail.com)) or phone (419-358-0832), and I will happily listen, share resources, and/or schedule a visit.

Rudi Kauffman

Treasurer for the Friends of SEMILLA Board



Photo from semillagt.org

## Peace Options perspective

MC USA and MCC have created an initiative to address the issue of military recruitment. Called Peaceful Options for Training and Careers, POTC has recently launched a website for young adults in the U.S. to find information about non-military careers, service, and training opportunities. POTC is "deeply committed to nonviolence and strives to show young people that there are peaceful and meaningful alternatives to enlistment," according to Joe Roos, chair of the POTC Steering Committee. More information can be found at <https://explorepotc.org/>.

## Wild Church perspective

MennoMedia is hosting a webinar to share about Forest Church and Wild Church worship resources in the Summer 2024 edition of Leader magazine. Forest Church and Wild Church are names for groups that worship outside of a building, recognizing that God is present and active in the world around us. These expressions of church also recognize that creation helps us in our understanding of God. Find out more and register at <https://www.mennomedia.org/register-now/>.

## AMBS perspective

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary offers a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership degree. This 32-credit-hour degree is designed to meet the needs of pastors and leaders and is developed from an Anabaptist perspective. For the January cohort, applications are due by September 15. To find out more, visit <https://shorturl.at/BK248>.

## Perspective deadlines

May 14 for May 16 issue

June 4 for June 6 issue