

**Central
District
Conference**
A conference of
Mennonite Church USA

Reporter

**KNOWING
CHRIST'S LOVE
– ANSWERING
GOD'S CALL**

JANUARY 2010

Silverwood MDS crew returns to Louisiana

Sixteen members of the Silverwood Mennonite know each other much better having lived together for a week in Cameron Parish, Louisiana, in November.

According to Titus King, "Our service project was a tremendous success. Yes, there were the 111 yards of concrete poured, there were trenches dug and reinforcing steel placed in them at three house sites....As importantly, we have renewed appreciation for our Anabaptist theological tenet of service to others."



Silverwood members "working in the trenches" at Cameron

Titus King: Our project was a tremendous success."

Last spring while finishing up the 2009-2010 building season in Cameron Parish, King had the idea of replicating the

foundation blitz of November 2009.

He imagined a group from Silverwood coming to give the 2010-2011 season another great start.

Roger Claassen agreed to return with his excavation equipment. Over the next several months plans were made, a sequence of work events was scheduled and expectations were formed about the work that would be accomplished.

The net result was that instead of one, there are two houses ready to be framed 8 feet up on their sturdy concrete block columns.

Northwestern Ohio "Brazo en Brazo" continues to assist Hispanic community

Brazo en Brazo (Arm in Arm), a community outreach of CDC congregations Lima Mennonite, First, Bluffton and Grace, along with two Ohio conference Lima-area congregations, reaches approximately 20 families. Jenny Zickafoose of Lima Mennonite, provided the Reporter this update on the program:

Brazo en Brazo connects with people in the Lima community who have emigrated from Spanish-speaking countries since 2004. The group's vision is ongoing discipleship with a focus on social and spiritual needs.

Paul and Ann Conrad continue their work with Brazo en Brazo through weekly Bible classes on Sundays with a worship service following the class. They provide transportation to and from appointments and help in translating for many appointments and provide weekly classes in English.



Fall Fiesta where over 120 persons attended

See page 6



Winter camp

January means winter youth weekend retreats at Camp Friedenswald. With snow on the ground, outdoor activities become even better.

Here are Jill Steinmetz and Liz Diller from Grace taking advantage of the snow to do some cross-country skiing.

Columbus January worship focuses on on new year thinking

Columbus Mennonite launched the new year with themes centering on starting fresh.

Ephiphany Sunday's focus affirmed individual wishes to let go of the secrets and untruths that bind.

The focus on Jan. 9 was on the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., especially the letter to the Birmingham Jail, and thinking about appropriate response as Christians to racism that exists today.

The practice of Firstfruits Giving, an extension of Firstfruits Living became the Jan. 16 focus. Firstfruits Living is a worship activity that flows naturally as a physical expression of the acknowledge of God's place in one's life.

The Jan. 30 worship theme focuses on how light is found in the darkness and how light is shared.

Bell calls attention to God's presence

First, Sugarcreek, Ohio, congregation added a meditative moment to its Dec. 19 worship service.

Several times throughout the worship, a bell sounded to call attention to God's presence.

According to the church bulletin: "This will be followed by a time of silence to slow down the tempo of worship, making hurried space, opening ourselves to God's presence.

"Use these spaces to release daily activities, allow the roar in our minds to quiet and to sink into a place where we can encounter God."

During Advent, the congregation's White Gift Offering assisted the Deacon's Fund. The fund enables the Church Council to meet some of the needs within the congregation throughout the year.

Host of preachers at Emmaus Fellowship

Several guest preachers will visit Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship, Berne, Ind., in January and February. The guest schedule follows:

- Jan. 9, Stephen (Tig) Intagliata (Bluffton University)
- Jan. 16, Ruth Guengerich (Mennonite Mission Network)
- Jan. 23, "Parables" - (Worship Team from Goshen College)
- Feb. 6, Ryan Algrim (First Mennonite, Indianapolis)
- Feb. 13, Sara Wenger Shenk
(Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary)

Silent and loud auction Feb. 12 at Normal

The MYF of Mennonite Church of Normal plan a fundraiser and "silent and loud auction" Feb. 12 with dessert and live music. A silent auction includes a kid's table. Higher-value items will be part of a loud auction. Proceeds go toward expenses to send youth to the national convention in Pittsburgh in July.

Topeka congregation's Christmas outreach

Topeka Mennonite congregation provided assistance to several families in need in its community during Christmas. A young member of the congregation stands near several bags of items put together by the congregation.



Comins votes to become independent Mennonite congregation

After several years of processing within the congregation, Comins Mennonite Church voted on Oct. 24, 2010, to end its relationship with Central District Conference and Mennonite Church USA. In a letter from their Spiritual Life Board, they expressed concern "about the direction we have observed CDC and MC USA leaning toward in regards to Biblical teachings...."

In October of 2009 board member James Rissler and conference minister Lois Kaufmann met with the congregation to talk about their concerns and relationship with the conference.

Their recent letter expressed gratitude for that visit, for their long-standing relationship with CDC and especially for the assistance they received from CDC churches after the tornado of 1999 destroyed their church building. They will continue as an independent Mennonite congregation.

Earl Zimmerman named Madison interim pastor

Earl Zimmerman became interim pastor at Madison Mennonite this past fall.

In other news related to the congregation, the Mennonite Voluntary Service unit has re-located to a different house in Madison. The unit this year is made up of Ryan Schmidt, Joe Friesen, Andy Shenk and Brent Beachy.

Adult Christian education has studied segments of Ezekiel; a series on Christianity, the Arts, and Moral Decisions; and has had speakers from Iraq Veterans Against War.

With help from Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ, the congregation assembled 64 MCC health kits.

For two Sundays in November, Lisa Weaver assembled a Mennonite Publishing Network resource table for persons to browse in time for Christmas orders.

Eighth Street members return to Meridian, Miss., in volunteer work project

A crew of volunteers from Eighth Street will return to Meridian, Miss., Jan. 15-22.

The group returns to Jubilee Mennonite Church for what is known as "8th DS." Church members will work with a variety of agencies in Meridian. Projects range from construction to serving food in a soup kitchen.

Shalom sends care packages to members serving in MCC

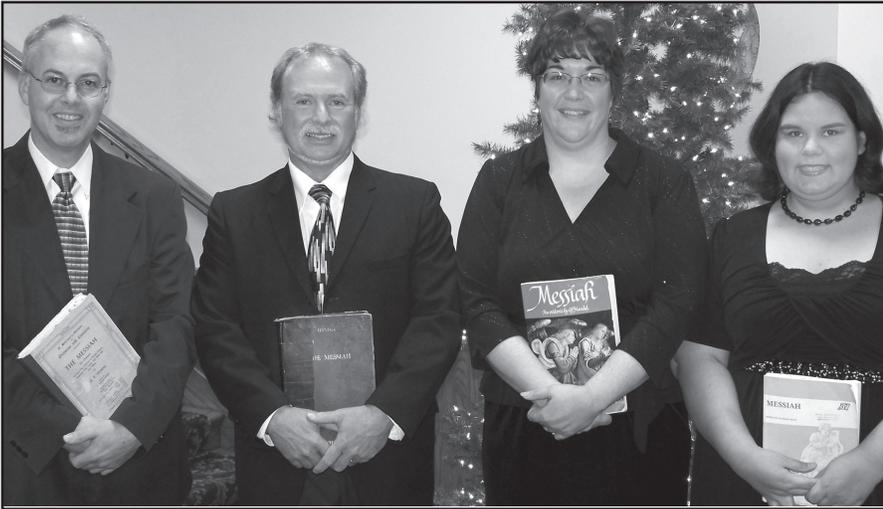
Members of Shalom, Harrisonburg, Va., created care packages in early December for Shalom families serving with Mennonite Central Committee.

Jen Harvey, Kerry Saner and Adonia are in Labrador. Nate Horst, Lara Ressler and Jahl and Ella are in Burundi.

In other church news, a parenting Sunday school class has started in January. "Parenting from the Inside Out," by Daniel Segal and Mary Hartzell is the book used in the class.

Sarah Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, guest preacher at First, Bluffton

Sarah Wenger Shenk, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., preached the sermon on Jan. 9, at First, Bluffton.



Brian Martin Burkholder, Jeff Boehr, Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Joanne Gallardo, soloists at Oak Grove's "Messiah"

Mennonite campus pastors "Messiah" soloists at Oak Grove

Campus pastors Brian Martin Burkholder (Eastern Mennonite University), Jeff Boehr (Bluffton University), Janeen Bertsche Johnson (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary) and Joanne Gallardo (Eastern Mennonite University) were the soloists for the 77th annual performance of Handel's "Messiah" at Oak Grove, on Dec. 19. Brian Wiebe of Goshen College, a former member of Oak Grove, directed the 85-voice choir and 12-member orchestra.

Many singers are members or former members of Oak Grove, including Brian Martin Burkholder, who has been the bass soloist several years. Last year, he was joined by Janeen Bertsche Johnson as alto soloist, and she suggested the team of campus pastor soloists this year.

Appropriately, the chorus, "Great was the company of the preachers" from "Messiah" was included this year. Lead campus pastor Tig Intagliata of Bluffton University joined the audience in support of his colleagues.

Brian Martin Burkholder is a former member of Oak Grove. Jeff Boehr is a member of First, Bluffton; Janeen Bertsche Johnson is a member of Eighth Street, Joanne Gallardo did her AMBS ministry internships at Eighth Street and Assembly; Brian Wiebe is a member of Eighth Street.

Carlock cantata rehearsals begin soon

The choir of Carlock will perform an Easter cantata "Footprints in the Sand," by Joseph Martin and David Angman. Rehearsals will begin in February.

Members of the congregation renewed their baptism vows in the first Sunday worship service of 2011. The renewal took place following a communion service.

Grace explores new areas of mission

Members of Grace congregation will meet in January to explore new areas of mission for the church.

"There were some new ideas generated by a Sharing Ourselves form distributed to members," said Dennis Schmidt, pastor. "We are looking for a group to discuss and discern which action projects we might undertake as a congregation. We are interested for ways we could be in mission to our community, our region and in our world."

Cincinnati focus on Genesis theme

"For The Love of the Earth: Studies in Genesis 1-3" is the theme of an Adult Forum study at Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship, this winter. The interactive study is a faith-based approach to caring for the earth.

Chicago Community reads Matthew

Members of the Chicago Community congregation had an opportunity to read aloud the entire Gospel of Matthew on Jan. 15. The reading of the entire gospel took place at Megan Ramer's home.

Atlanta Fellowship in human rights event

Members of the Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship created a display for a human rights event. The event was held at the American Friends Service Committee building, downtown Atlanta in December.

Bonyton MYF fundraiser assists travel to Pittsburgh

The Mennonite Youth Fellowship of Boynton Mennonite hosted a biscuits and gravy breakfast fundraiser on Jan. 8. Donations went toward expenses for the July 2011 youth convention in Pittsburgh.

Paoli Transition and Listening Committee gathering responses

Paoli Mennonite Transition and Listening Committee is busy this winter. The committee is obtaining responses to leadership transition and congregational direction.

In January, members of the committee began meeting with small groups in the congregation. Members not in small groups also had an opportunity to meet with a committee representative.

According to the church newsletter, "An important indicator of congregational health is the quality of lay leadership, says a new study offered by Mennonite Church leaders Marlene Kropf and Jane Roeschley."

Through three Sundays in January the congregation will have a special focus on the theme of "Growing Lay Leaders." That focus will continue in worship services throughout 2011.

Assembly donates \$3,200 to MCC in Haiti relief support

Assembly Mennonite recently donated \$3,200 to Mennonite Central Committee to support Haiti relief and Global Family programs in Zimbabwe and the Machanga Girl's School in Mozambique.

Another donation was \$500 toward material resource kits in Goshen.

Hively Avenue class focuses on widening congregational welcome

"Widening the Welcome of Your Church – Biblical Hospitality and the Vital Congregation" is the focus of the Coffee and Conversation Class Sunday morning discussion at Hively Avenue Mennonite.

A book by that title will be discussed by the class during the education hour this winter as the congregation takes a serious look at the broader issues of hospitality.



Max Wyse begins MCC assignment

Max Wyse of Columbus, Ohio, has begun a one-year work assignment with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in China as an English teacher.

Wyse obtained a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Goshen College. He attended Columbus Mennonite. Wyse participated in an orientation of 35 workers at MCC offices in Akron.

Lind tells of MCC's role in World March of Women in Congo

In solidarity with thousands of women who have been sexually assaulted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, five Mennonite Congolese women joined an international rally of women calling for peace, demilitarization and the end of violence against women, according to Suzanne Lind, who with her husband, Tim, serve as Mennonite Central Committee representatives in Congo. The Linds are member of Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite.

This global group of women gathered Oct. 17 for the World March of Women 2010 in Bukavu, the capital of Congo's South Kivu province. MCC sponsored the women's participation to encourage their involvement and interest in the broader church, ecumenical connections and peace and justice issues. The event also allowed Mennonite women from eastern and western Congo to learn to know each other better as they explored issues they can share in their churches.

"In eastern Congo, rape has become a horrible sickness," said Lind. "The sickness is caused by the past 200 years of violent exploitation of the Congolese people, poverty and the world's greed for the country's abundant natural resources.

"The primary purpose of rape (within Congo's war) is to destroy the strongest ties of solidarity within communities, leaving them easy to displace and control," Lind said. "The land then quickly becomes available for mining and the forests for cutting by the strongest group. Motivated by the big money available through the sale of minerals, leaders on all levels (military, local government, national government) encourage and condone violent anarchy as a way to make money and remain in power."

Faith holds intergenerational knitting nights

A weekly intergenerational knitting night is taking place this winter by members of Faith congregation. The weekly sessions last from 7 to 8:30 p.m. "It's a way we learn to know each other better over knitting, tea and conversation," said Gwen Gustafson-Zook.

Brazo en Brazo - from page 1

The Conrads volunteer in this ministry but are reimbursed for their travel expenses.

Recently Marti Meza has taken a more active role helping the Conrads. Meza works with the ministry nearly 12 hours each week. She helps with supportive services to the Hispanic families and individuals through evangelism and social networking.

The Conrads are testimony to the ministry of those directly affected by the social and spiritual needs of the Hispanic community.

Weekly updates are offered to churches who help fund Brazo en Brazo's costs for printing in bulletins.

"The Conrads are testimony to the ministry of those directly affected by the social and spiritual needs of the Hispanic community. They often tell the story of a person or family who has experienced help and

support of Brazo en Brazo," said Zickafoose.

"The concept of giving and receiving is important in the ministry and this year's theme has been 'Opening Opportunities,' which includes the encouragement of cross cultural exchanges.

Financial support in 2010 came from supporting Mennonite congregations and individual donations of \$5,734, an annual fall Fiesta \$600 monetary gift; and contributions from CDC and Ohio Mennonite Conference of nearly \$7,000.

Mick Sommers accepts Pennsylvania pastorate

Mick Sommers, a member of Central District Conference Ministerial Committee and former CDC president, has accepted the lead pastorate at Ridgeville Mennonite, Gordonville, Pa.

Three recent graduates serving in SALT with MCC

Three recent college graduates with CDC connections are participants in the Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) assignments this year. The program is for young adults from the U.S. and Canada who volunteer outside their countries.

Natasha Diener of Goshen, Ind., is serving in Bolivia as an after-school program worker. She has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton University.

Jeremy Good of Reading, Pa., is serving in Bolivia as a rural community development worker. He has a bachelor's degree from Goshen College and attends Assembly.

Kelsey Smith of Celina, Ohio, is serving in Nepal as an ESL teacher. She has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton University.

CDC financial facts: six months 2010-11 report

| | |
|--|----------|
| Income | \$99,631 |
| Expenses | \$94,384 |
| YTD difference | \$5,247 |
| Spending Plan | \$99,628 |
| Difference from Spending Plan | \$3 |
| Thank you for your prayers and generous support. | |
| <i>-Chris Habegger, CDC Treasure</i> | |

CDC calendar

Jan. 29 - Michiana regional meeting, Assembly, Goshen

Feb. 12 - West Ohio regional meeting, Lima Mennonite

March 26 - Chicago regional meeting, Chicago Community

April 15 - Board of Directors, Ministerial Committee, Stewardship Committee, Camp Freidenswald

April 16 - Leadership Council, Missional Church Committee, Camp Freidenswald

June 23-25 - CDC annual meeting, Silverwood Mennonite, Goshen, Ind.

July 4-9 - Mennonite Church USA convention, Pittsburgh, Pa.

CENTRAL DISTRICT REPORTER Volume 55, Number 1, January, 2011

Editors: Fred and Mary P. Steiner

E-mail: steinerm@bluffton.edu

The Reporter is published six times a year. It is the official organ of communication among the churches of Central District Conference of the Mennonite Church USA. It is distributed free to CDC congregations through the CDC spending plan. It is printed by Boehr Print, Bluffton, Ohio.

Central District Office:

Lois Johns Kaufmann, conference minister

Emma Hartman, administrator

1015 Division St., Goshen, IN 46528

Phone: 574-534-1485

Fax: 574-534-8654

E-mail: office@mcusacdc.org

www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net