



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

Reporter

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

MAY 2011

June 23-25 at Silverwood Mennonite, Goshen

“Following Christ and Growing Together” CDC 55th annual meeting theme

With the theme “Following Christ and Growing Together” Central District Conference delegates gather at Silverwood Mennonite Church, in Goshen, Indiana, for its 55th annual business session June 23-25.

A mix of business, worship, hearing congregational stories and reconnecting with friends across the conference highlight the sessions. Activities are planned for all age groups and families are encouraged to attend with their young children.

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A plenary session titled “Approaching Scripture Together,” led by Loren Johns, Professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., is among the session highlights.

Lois Kaufmann, conference minister, said, “In this session we will consider the gift represented by the Bible and listen to

each other’s stories with regard to the Bible. We will delight in Scripture and seek to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church today.”

Delegates will hear about Reign of God grants from the Missional Church Committee. Earlier this year the Committee created the grants, which are available to CDC congregations. With the support of CDC’s Board and Stewardship Committee, the grants encourage missional activity by congregations.



Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana

Congregational stories

Three congregations will share their stories with delegates. Those congregations are Columbus Mennonite of Columbus, Ohio, Shalom Community Church of Ann Arbor, Mich., and Hively Avenue of Elkhart, Ind.

Persons attending the event will have an opportunity to hear preaching from three CDC pastors. Ron Guengerich, pastor of the host congregation, will preach Thursday evening, June 23. His sermon “God’s YES To Us,” is based upon 2 Corinthians 1:18-19 and Luke 1:26-38.

Preaching on Friday evening is Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, pastor of Assembly Mennonite. Her sermon is titled “Our YES To God,” is based upon 2 Corinthians 1:18-19 and Luke 19:1-10.

Saturday morning’s worship service preacher is James Rissler, pastor of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship. His sermon title “God’s YES And Our YES Together,” is based on 2 Corinthians 1:18-19 and Luke 9:10-17. Worship will conclude with a Communion service.

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From CDC Board of Directors

We really do need each other

Soon we will gather for our annual meeting at Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. We will gather as representatives of congregations to worship, discern, inspire and build relationships. We will gather like a family of adult sisters and brothers who love each other and find strength in our commonalities as well as in our differences.

This will be the last time I gather at an annual meeting as President of CDC, an office I have been privileged to hold during the latter part of my four-year term on the Board of Directors. While in this role, I have worked with an exceptional CDC staff, an extraordinary CDC board, and a diverse, faithful, and fun body of CDC constituents. However, as good as that has been, it has not been the primary reason I agreed to take on this role.

The main reason I accepted the volunteer position as conference president is that I believe we and our various congregations are not little islands unto ourselves, but that we need each other to more fully be the body of Christ. I believe we who are city congregations need our rural brothers and sisters, and vice versa; we who are little churches need our bigger congregations, and vice versa; we who are liberal fellowships need our conservative brothers and sisters, and vice versa!

Usually being a part of the larger body is a joy; however, sometimes it is difficult – especially when our differences threaten our unity. But that doesn't diminish our need for each other. Frankly, I think it's arrogant to think we don't need each other. When conferences use their power to expel or punish those who, after biblical and Christ-centered discernment, come to hold minority understanding, they diminish themselves.

We need all that which comes with being connected to a larger body – the broader perspectives, the expanded opportunity for mission, the inspiration we receive from others, the relational accountability, the organized care for our pastors, and the enhanced discernment that comes with the broader circle. Area conference is an accessible and tangible way to make these larger connections, and coming to annual meeting is one important way to participate in this larger circle.

I have been excited about CDC's focus the past

few years to build honest, respectful connections between all of us in the conference – ones that neither avoid our differences nor get stuck in destructive arguments about them. The past two years we've called this theme "Following Christ and Growing Together" – a title that echoes the 2009 denominational resolution on "following Christ and growing together as communities even in conflict." At the 2010 annual meeting, we particularly worked at building our capacity to engage our differences – knowing that we cannot live out the best of our CDC polity without doing so.

This year we hope to build on that important work. Engaging our differences is not something we do once and are then done with it. Rather, as we learn how to address our differences in healthy ways we begin to see one of the important paradoxes of conference life – that our differences can in fact be part of our strength as a body. It is our differences that help us see new and larger perspectives; they help us grow.

But we need more than differences among us to be a healthy body. In fact, it is crucial that we do not lose sight of the commonalities which bring us together and help build the unity to which scripture calls us. For we are all called by God to be followers of Jesus Christ, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

During our time together at Silverwood, we will worship, pray, study scripture, envision cooperative mission, build relationships, and (if I know CDC) laugh together. We will also do important work of the conference together – get to know St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship, renew our conference minister's term, make changes in our organizational documents, and adopt a spending plan.

I trust that in the end, this time of worshipful work and relationship building will be a blessing to those gathered and a manifestation of the reality that we really do need each other. I hope to see you there and together experience the best of a healthy family of adult sisters and brothers who know Christ's Love and answer God's Call.

- Karl Shelly
CDC President

Central District Conference

55th annual business session schedule

Thursday, June 23

11 a.m. Golf scramble

3 p.m. Registration begins at Silverwood

5 p.m. Pastor appreciation dinner at Silverwood

7:30 p.m. **Worship I**

• Speaker: Ron Guengerich

“God’s YES To Us,” (2 Corinthians 1:18-19; Luke 1:26-38)

Fellowship and snacks following service

Friday, June 24

8:30 a.m. **Business Session I**

• Welcome

• Introduction of Parliamentarian, Resolution and Listening Committees

• Roll Call

ACTION: 2010 Annual Meeting Minutes

• Historical Vignette

• State of the Conference Address

9:25 a.m. Get acquainted around tables

Dwelling in the Word

10-10:30 a.m. Congregational Story:

Columbus Mennonite Church

ACTION: Slate

• Commissioning of incoming and continuing committee members

• Treasurer’s Report/Presentation of 2011-2012 Spending Plan

11 a.m. Ministerial Committee Highlights

• Introduction of Guests

• Announcements

11:45 a.m. Lunch at Silverwood

12:45 p.m. Visiting/display

1:15 p.m. **Business Session II**

• Congregational Story:

Shalom Community Church

• Introduction of St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship

• MCC Great Lakes Report

• Bluffton University Report

1:45 p.m. **Plenary Session:**

Approaching Scripture Together

Is the diversity of our approaches to Scripture something to be lamented and eradicated...or celebrated...or something else?

In this session we will consider the gift represented by

the Bible and listen to each other’s stories with regard to the Bible. We will delight in Scripture and seek to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church today.

- Led by Loren Johns, Professor of New Testament at AMBS

3:15 p.m. Transition to workshops/drink break

3:45 p.m. Workshops

5:15 p.m. Transition

5:30 p.m. Dinner

• Mennonite Women dinner at Silverwood

• Mennonite Men dinner at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church, 2509 Berkey Ave., Goshen

7 p.m. Free time

7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. **WORSHIP II:**

• Speaker Heidi Siemens-Rhodes

“Our YES To God,”

(2 Corinthians 1-19, Luke 7:36-50 or Luke 19:1-10)

• Offering

9 p.m. Interacting with St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship

Saturday, June 25

8:30 a.m. **Business Session III:**

• Congregational Story:

Hively Avenue Mennonite

• Recognition of Journey graduates

• Camp Friedenswald highlights

• Word from MC USA:

Featured agency is Mennonite Education Agency

9:30 a.m. **ACTION: 2011-12 Spending Plan**

ACTION: Renewal of Conference Minister’s term

ACTION: Changes to articles/constitution

9:45 a.m. Recognition of congregational transition:

Comins Mennonite Church

• Open mic

10:15 a.m. Listening Committee report

ACTION: Gratitude Resolution

• Close of business sessions

10:30 a.m. Transition to worship/drink break

11 a.m. **WORSHIP III**

• Speaker: James Rissler

“God’s YES And Our YES Together”

(2 Corinthians 1:18-19, Luke 9:10-17)

• Communion

12:30 p.m. Going home (*no lunch served on site*)

Continued from page 1

“Following Christ and Growing Together”

Introduction of St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship

During the weekend, delegates will be introduced to St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship located in St Paul, Minn. The congregation has applied for membership in Central District Conference. On Friday evening delegates will have the opportunity to interact with members of the Fellowship.

Two significant actions are on the annual meeting agenda. Those include action on a proposed \$203,927 2011-12 spending plan, and renewal of a three-year term for Lois Kaufmann, CDC conference minister. Kaufmann assumed the role of conference minister in September 2008.

Delegates will hear a State of the Conference address by Karl Shelly, whose term as conference president expires at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

Pastor appreciation dinner

A pastor appreciation dinner will take place at 5 p.m., Thursday, June 23, at Silverwood. Entertainment is by The Schmaltzentrubers. The group performs a mix of folk, gospel, blues and original songs. Members are Leonard Beechy, Steve Johnson and Evan Miller, members of Eighth Street Mennonite. Reservations are required by June 10.

Friday workshops

Friday afternoon workshops focus on the following subjects: “Building For The Future: The use of deferred and estate gifts in our congregations,” “Growing Together Through Relational Accountability,” “Immigration Issues,” “Perspective On Young Adult Faith,” “Pittsburgh 2011 Preview,” “Practical Ways To Build Community for All: Following Christ and growing together through supportive care,” and “Waiting For US To Care: Responding to human trafficking in our midst.”

Workshop leaders and summaries of workshops are found inside this issue.

Delegates have an opportunity to give back to the annual meeting’s host community. This year the Center for Healing and Hope, a Goshen area non-profit organization, was

chosen. The Center For Healing and Hope is an urgent care center for the uninsured, the under-insured, and those with unmet health care needs in the Goshen and Elkhart communities. To learn more, visit their website at <http://www.chhgoshen.org/>.

Children’s activities

Several activities are planned for children ages infant to sixth grade. Childcare will be available for infants through age 3 during the pastor appreciation dinner, delegate and worship sessions.

Childcare (and a meal) for infants through age 3 is also available during the pastor appreciation dinner.

Childcare is available for children ages 4 to sixth grade during the pastor appreciation dinner, all delegate and worship sessions. Activities for children in this age group are also available beginning Friday morning.

Planned activities for children include games and crafts, outdoor water play, a trip to DeFries Calendar Garden in River Preserve Park and to a local vegetable garden.

Honor gifts

Delegates will have the opportunity of giving a gift in recognition of a friend or family member during the annual meeting. Gift suggestions may be made as a memorial or as a tribute to someone living, for example a relative, pastor, mentor, Sunday school teacher or friend. Designee names will be visible on an honor board at the annual meeting.

Golf scramble

This year’s golf scramble is at noon, Thursday, June 23, at Black Squirrel Golf Club, 1017 Larimer Dr., Goshen. The scramble offers several opportunities to raise funds for CDC. These include player fees and hole sponsors. Player’s fees are \$50 per person or \$200 per team, which includes green fees, electric cart and a light lunch. Registration deadline is June 14. Hole sponsors are available for \$80 per hole. Contact Kevin Farmwald at kfarmwald@8thStMennonite.org for more information.

Registration information

Persons interested in attending the annual meeting may visit CDC’s website at www.centraldistrict.com for registration forms.

The registration fee for adults and high school youth who register by June 10 is \$40. The fee after June 10 is \$50. Registration for children ages 4 to grade 6 who register by June 10 is \$15 per child. The fee after June 10 is \$20 per child.

Persons with special needs are asked to indicate those needs on the registration form.

Payments

Registration checks may be payable to Central District Conference. Send checks to Central District Conference, 1015 Division St., Goshen, Ind., 46526. Persons may also pay using a credit card by calling 800-663-2264 or 576-534-1485.

Annual meeting location

The annual meeting is held at Silverwood Mennonite Church, 1712 W. Clinton St., Goshen, Ind. 46526. The church phone is 574-533-1922. E-mail: info@silverwoodmc.org. Website: www.silverwoodmc.org.

2011 slate of nominees

Board of directors

Ron Guengerich, president-elect
Silverwood

Tim Stair, member-at-large
Southside Fellowship

Ministerial Committee

Jep Hostetler (*incumbent*)
Columbus

Megan Ramer
Chicago Community

Missional Church Committee

Omie Baumgartner
Silverwood

Janeen Bertsche Johnson
Eighth Street

Gerald Mast
First, Bluffton

Annual Meeting Committee

Randy Keeler
St. John

Camp Friedenswald

Jim Bare

Eighth Street

David Moser (*appointed to complete a term*)
Southside

Kevin Nickel
First, Bluffton

Workshops at Silverwood

Friday, June 28, 3:45 to 5:15 p.m.

◆ Building for the Future: The use of deferred and estate gifts in our congregations

Presenters: Roger Nafziger, Goshen College Director of Planned Giving and Jim Neff, Everence Mennonite Foundation

What binds us together or what we have shared passion about in our congregations as we seek to share Christ's love in our world, often involves expenditures of energy and resources.

Imagine a future in which the underwriting of a core part of your congregation's program or outreach is fully endowed – that is to say there are funds invested that produce enough income to sustain and even grow a program in the coming years.

One common way to build such endowments is through deferred and estate gifts. Come to this workshop to learn more about how these types of gifts work and how they might benefit both the donor and the congregation.

◆ Growing Together Through Relational Accountability

Presenters: Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Campus Pastor at AMBS and Robert Martz, Pastor at Topeka Mennonite Church

We will explore how congregations in CDC might address differences between them on contentious issues; especially those issue which MC USA has spoken to or adopted as a teaching position. How can accountability work in CDC given our historical polity? How do we as a conference keep from operating in a way that suggests that each congregation is free to do what it wants and it's no one else's business?

◆ Immigration Issues

Presenter: Saulo Padilla, MCC US Immigration Education Director

The plight of recent immigrants is of significant concern to MC USA. Saulo Padilla will help us examine how followers of Jesus might respond to this issue – whether we should attend the MC USA gathering in Phoenix in 2013, and how we might respond in our home communities now.

◆ Perspectives on Young Adult Faith

Presenter: Bob Yoder, Goshen College Campus Pastor and Associate Professor of Youth Ministry; Co-editor of Youth Ministry at a Crossroad: Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth

Bob Yoder will lead a conversation about youth and young adult faith perspectives, drawing from his own research, national studies and Youth Ministry course content. Yoder will present information and lead a discussion of how perspectives change as youth move into the young adult stage of life.

◆ Pittsburgh 2011 Preview

Presenter: Terry Shue, MC USA Director of Leadership Development

Terry Shue will give an overview of the issues that will be discussed at Pittsburgh 2011. The overview will be followed by a question and answer time.

◆ Practical Ways to Build Community for All: Following Christ and growing together through supportive care

Presenters: Jim and Phyllis Smith. Jim is president of Anabaptist Disabilities Network, ADNet

An interactive presentation on supportive care, a practical approach to building community that surround and includes individuals living with significant disabilities and their families. Jim and Phyllis will share from personal experience some of the ways their lives and their congregation have been enriched through a supportive care group at Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. The interdependent group provides support and community for the Smiths and their adult son, Ben, who lives with schizophrenia. Copies of ADNet's newly revised book, Supportive Care in the Congregation, will be available.

◆ Waiting for US to Care: Responding to human trafficking in our midst

Presenter: Laurel Neufeld Weaver, MSW LISW-S

Participants will be reintroduced to the statement about Human Trafficking that was made at the Columbus 2009 MC USA convention. Mennonite Women chose to take leadership in alerting congregations to the hidden global crime of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a terrible human tragedy that binds us together by calling us to respond as a faith community.

The workshop will provide facts, stories of individuals who have been victims, signs to recognize victims of trafficking, and suggestion congregational response to this issue. Participants will gain knowledge about how our purchases can be connected to this suffering.

Need more information?

All necessary forms for the 2011 annual meeting at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind, may be downloaded at: www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net

Or, you may call:

1-800-662-2264, or 574-534-1485 (Credit card payments may be made over the telephone.)

If registering by mail, send payment with printed registration form to:

Central District Conference
1015 Division St.
Goshen, IN 46526



Three CDC pastors will preach during the annual meeting. They are, from left, Ron Guengerich, Silverwood; Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, Assembly; and James Rissler, Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship.



The Schmaltzentrubers will entertain at the Pastor Appreciation Banquet. Members are Steve Johnson, Leonard Beechy and Evan Miller, members of Eighth Street, Goshen.

Annual meeting planners

Annual meeting Program Planning Committee:

Hal Hess (Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship), Ellen Miller (Shalom Mennonite Congregation), and Gerry Schrock (Mennonite Church of Normal)

Annual meeting Local Worship Planning Committee:

Rachel Miller Jacobs (Faith Mennonite Church), David Moser (Southside Fellowship), and Brenda Sawatzky-Paetkau (Eighth Street Mennonite Church)

In charge of music at the annual meeting:

Faithful Bread from Faith Mennonite Church

CDC financial facts: 10 months 2010-11 report

Income	\$150,285
Expenses	\$156,411
YTD difference	-\$6,126
Spending Plan	\$165,355
Difference from Spending Plan	-\$15,070

Our current fiscal year closes the end of June and as the deficit is significant, we very much appreciate your prayers and generous support to close the gap in these last few weeks. - *Chris Habegger, CDC Treasurer*

CDC calendar

May 15 - Matt Hickman ordination at Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Illinois

May 22 - Miriam Zehr licensing at Oak Grove, Smithville, Ohio

May 25 - Pastoral Care Workshop, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana

June 23-25 - CDC annual meeting, Silverwood Mennonite, Goshen, Indiana

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

CENTRAL DISTRICT REPORTER

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