



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

Reporter

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

SEPTEMBER 2011

Game night

Youth from First, Bluffton, and Grace held a “game night” with residents of Maple Crest senior living community, Bluffton, in mid-September. At left Jill Steinmetz of Grace, and Wanda Pannabecker of First, watch as First youth leader Allison King plays her hand in Rummikub.



Mennonite Church of Normal with First, Urbana, plan immigration forum

First Mennonite, Urbana, and Mennonite Church of Normal will sponsor an immigration forum in Urbana, Ill., on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 22-23. The two-day event is titled “The Immigration Debate: Truth, Compassion and Justice.”

Two Saturday sessions are planned. The first, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. features Saulo Padilla. His topic is “Understanding and Mending the Broken Immigration System.” He will explore major issues of the current immigration debate from a Christian and citizen perspective highlighting often-overlooked parts of the debate.

From 3 to 4:30 p.m. Dean Linsenmeyer will tell about how the church is historically a safety-net for the marginalized and a wit-

ness to society. He will draw on his own pastoral experience with immigrants to discuss how that role can be carried out today. His

**The Immigration Debate:
Truth, Compassion
& JUSTICE**

presentation is titled “Church: God’s Kingdom amid U.S. Society.”

On Sunday Matthew Soerens will challenge Christians to view the immigration issue from the perspective of their faith. His

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From CDC Board of Directors

How does God work in your life?

I like the story, “Now One Foot, Now the Other” by Tomie dePaola. This is a story about Bob (the grandfather) and Bobby (the grandson). Bob asked that Bobby call him Bob rather than grandpa because it was easier to say. Bob was the first word Bobby said. Bob taught Bobby how to hold a spoon and how to walk by standing behind him and holding his hands and saying, “Now one foot, now the other.”

Bobby often said to Bob, “Tell me stories – tell about how you taught me to walk.” Bobby was five when Bob had a stroke. After weeks in the hospital, Bob came home. He still couldn’t walk, talk or feed himself and the doctors didn’t think he recognized anyone. It’s when Bobby discovered that Bob did know everyone that Bob began to recover. “Bobby” was the first word he said; Bobby taught him to hold a spoon and feed himself.

One day, Bobby said to Bob, “Tell me stories, tell me how you taught me to walk.” When Bob finished the story, he asked Bobby to stand in front of him. Bobby knew what he wanted. He stood in front of Bob and Bob put his hands on Bobby’s shoulders and pulled himself up. Bobby said, “Now one foot, now the other” and Bob took his first steps.

This family story reminds me of the church family. Telling God’s story and telling stories about people who live for God help children learn to walk in God’s ways. And, isn’t it rewarding when we see children become the teachers?

In August the Central District Conference Board of Directors and the chairpersons of

the Missional Church Committee and the Ministerial Committee met to do vision planning and to select the next two-year focus for CDC.

Lois Kaufmann asked, “What Bible stories overlay CDC’s story?” She invited us to take our Bibles and spend time reading and considering the question.

Here’s a list of our list of stories: Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Paul and Barnabas, the Wise Man and the Foolish Man, the Exodus, Jesus questioned by the Pharisees, Emmaus Road, Ruth and Boaz, Zacchaeus, the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal son and the story of Mary and Martha.

We felt this collection (with themes of hospitality and Jesus welcoming with wide open arms) was CDC’s story. We concluded that story telling is very important – stories are energizing, they give us life and help us make connections with each other.

It wasn’t long before we had identified our two-year focus – God’s Story...our stories. In the months to come the Board will continue to develop ways to work with the two-year focus.

Please pray for Lois Kaufmann our conference minister, Emma Hartman, our conference administrator, and all those who have said “Yes” to conference leadership roles as we strive to meet the needs of the CDC family.

Tell me a story...How is God at work in your life? How did you learn to walk? I am looking forward to hearing your stories.

– **Joyce Schumacher, CDC President**



Sun Ju Moon



Rachel Nolt



Jeremy Shue

Three AMBS graduates have CDC connections

Three persons with Central District Conference connections graduated in May from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. The graduates are Sun Ju Moon, Rachel Nolt and Jeremy Shue.

Moon graduated with a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in biblical studies. She will participate in Dong San Korean Methodist Church, Houston, Texas, as youth pastor for one year as OPT (Optional Practical Training). She and her family have participated in Hively Avenue, where she did a pastoral ministry internship, and Grace Baptist Church, Mishawaka.

Nolt graduated with a Master of Divinity. Nolt is pursuing a ministry assignment. She is a member of Eighth Street.

Shue graduated with a Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in mission and evangelism. He serves part-time as the Minister of Outreach at Silverwood, and is pursuing opportunities that will combine business and ministry.

Eileen Ahern receives Award of Merit

Eileen Ahern, member of Madison Mennonite, received an Award of Merit in the 2010 Best of the Christian Press awards given in April. Her piece "Helping Those in the Hell of PTSD," was published in *The Mennonite*. The award is in the feature article category. PTSD stands of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Kaufmann performs "Cotton Patch Gospel"

Phil Kaufmann performed two shows of the "Cotton Patch Gospel," in late July at Assembly. The performance was a multimedia one-person show of Harry Chapin's musical based on Clarence Jordan's "Cotton Patch Gospel." One-half of the proceeds went to The Window, Goshen; one-fourth to WHY Hunger, to combat world-wide hunger and one-fourth to Mennonite Central Committee food projects.

Lima Women's Group silent auction

Lima Mennonite's Women's Group silent auction took place from July 17 to Aug. 14. This year's goal was \$500. Proceeds supported mission projects of the Women's Group. Among those mission projects are the church's daycare staff and children's gifts, daycare graduation and compassion gifts used throughout the year.

Wadsworth congregation reading Exodus

The Wadsworth congregation is challenged to read through the book of Exodus this fall. Sermon themes during an eight-week period this fall focus on Exodus stories. Members who read the entire book are rewarded by placing a tea light candle in a sanctuary window.

"Revelation of the Magi" book topic

Members of Cincinnati Fellowship book club read "Revelation of the Magi," by Brent Landau this summer.

Kurt Litwiller releases two new books

Kurt Litwiller, pastor of Boynton Mennonite, recently published two books: "Humble King to Conquering King" and "Changed by the King's Presence."

Litwiller has now published four books. The first two were titled: "Living Out the Called Life" and "New Covenant Living."

Carlock's blessing of the generations

The Carlock congregation is blessed with many generations of members, James Bortell, pastor, writes in the September church newsletter.

At the opening of worship on Sept. 11 several persons representing different generations responded to informal questions for the benefit of all members. The congregation used this time to learn and appreciate all the similarities and differences that make up the "blessing of generation," said Bortell.

Questions included:

- If you could be any age, what age would you be and why?
- What is/was your favorite toy or pasttime as a child?
- What music do/did you enjoy when you are/were 12?
- Names stores where you shop.
- What historical event do you best remember?

Tea and salon raises famine funds

A women's and girls' tea with nail salon took place at Grace, Pandora on Sept. 10. The event was sponsored by girls in third, fourth and fifth grades to benefit Mennonite Central Committee's famine relief in East Africa.

The congregation's penny carnival on Sept. 4 included an evening of fun, food and games all for a penny. Proceeds assisted the KING'S Club (Kids IN Grace Saturday) at the church.

Grace MYF is accepting orders for salsa, by the pint or quart, mild, hot or "killer." Youth made the salsa in September as a fundraiser.

Chicago Community worships on Dunes

Members of Chicago Community gathered at the Indiana Dunes State Park for a July 24 worship service. A potluck picnic followed.

On Sept. 4, members of the congregation held a hymn sing at Heritage Woods, an assisted living home in East Garfield Park.

Oak Grove supports summer MS project

The Oak Grove congregation supported a Multiple Sclerosis Haystack Lunch on July 17 held in Smithville. The fundraiser raised over \$1,800 for MS research.

First, Sugarcreek, holds hog roast

An Aug. 28 church hog roast signaled the end of summer for members of First, Sugarcreek. A hayride and other events were part of the roast.

First, Nappanee, women's Bible study

Women of First, Nappanee, are involved in an interdenominational Wednesday morning Bible study this fall. The focus is on Father Abraham beginning in Genesis.

Topeka-Assembly plan joint worship

The congregation of Topeka and Assembly plan a joint worship service on Oct. 30.

Safe sanctuary training held at Cincinnati

Members of Cincinnati Fellowship held a safe sanctuary training following the Aug. 28 worship service.

On Sept. 3 the congregation held a potluck-games party celebrating the end of summer.

Mennonite Church of Normal with First, Urbana, plan immigration forum

presentation examines immigration from a biblical perspective and its impact on churches in the United States. Sunday's forum theme is "Welcoming the Stranger."

Arts Weekend in February

Mennonite Arts Weekend, sponsored by Cincinnati Fellowship, is Feb. 3-5, 2012. The event includes Goshen College Women's World Music Choir.

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Saturday's session takes place from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at First Mennonite Church. Sunday's session takes place from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the Champaign Public Library.

Representatives from other CDC congregations interested in forming a task group have expressed interest in attending the forum.

For more information visit First, Urbana, website: <http://www.fmc-cu.org/>

The Immigration Debate:
**Truth, Compassion
& JUSTICE**

Hively launches Buddy Walk/Run

Hively Avenue's Witness and Caring Commission's fall focus promotes living health lives.

Toward that goal, the Commission is encouraging its members to consider exercising and enjoyment of the outdoors.

■ **Greg Suderman of Hively:** "It's an opportunity to meet new persons and really a great way to experience community, while doing something good for yourself."

During September, the Commission invites the congregation to walk, jog or run at the Pierre Moran School track. The Commission is suggesting twice a week visits to the track.

Greg Suderman writes in Hively's church newsletter that the event is not a competitive activity. "All you have to do is show up and hook up with others who walk or run at a similar pace."

"It's an opportunity to meet new persons and really a great way to experience community, while doing something good for yourself," he says.

Southside forms Emerging Vision task group

Southside Fellowship recently formed an Emerging Vision task group. It will focus on:

- Southside's current congregational strengths and challenges.
- Options and choices the congregation may have.

The task group will report its finding and recommendations in a congregational meeting in January.

Golf benefit at Friedenswald

Camp Friedenswald's first-ever golf benefit is Saturday, Oct. 1, at Meadow Valley Golf Club, Middlebury, Ind. For details and to register go to www.friedenswald.org.

Palmer Becker Silverwood guest

Palmer Becker was a guest preacher at Silverwood on Sept. 18. He spoke during the Christian Education hour on "Letting Christ Restore the Church," he preached the morning sermon titled "Becoming Ambassadors of Restoration," and spoke informally during a potluck following the service.

Florence youth make tamales

During Sunday school on Sept. 18 youth from the Florence Church made tamales for the Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale.

Perfect day for a pontoon ride

Justin Weaver prepares to take the Camp Friedenswald pontoon out on Shavehead Lake.

Passengers are participants who attended the Sept. 16-18 CDC Women's Retreat.



CDC calendar

October 2011

- 12 West Ohio Pastor Peer, 9:30 am
- 13 Central Illinois Pastor Peer, 9 am
- At Camp Friedenswald*
- 14 Board of Directors 8:45 am
- 14 Ministerial Committee 6:30 pm
- 14 Stewardship Committee 6:30 pm
- 15 Leadership Council 7:45 am
- 15 Missional Church 1:30 pm
- 24-26 Constituency Leaders Council
- 28-29 Everence Finances/
Ministry Seminar

November 2011

- 2 Mid-States Conference
Ministers Retreat
- 11-13 Men's Retreat
at Friedenswald
- 30-Dec. 3 Conference Ministers
meeting

January 2012

- 14 West Ohio regional meeting at
Grace Mennonite, Pandora

Emmaus Road has guest preachers

Several special programs are planned and guest preachers will visit the Emmaus Road congregation this fall.

Everett Thomas, editor of *The Mennonite*, will be the guest preacher Sunday, Oct. 2. On Oct. 9, the congregation will have an evening campfire service. On Oct. 15, the congregation will have a soup supper, with a discussion to follow.

Karen Andres, associate pastor of Tabor Mennonite, rural Newton, Kansas, with Marcene Entz, will conduct the Oct. 16 service.

CDC Financial Facts: Two months, 2011-12 report

Income	\$18,742
Expenses	\$28,195
YTD difference	-\$9,453
Spending Plan	\$32,071
Difference from Spending Plan	-\$13,329

Thank you for your prayers and generous support, as together we fulfill our conference missional activities.

-Chris Habegger, CDC Treasurer

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