

## Resonate committee listens, studies, prays

**Bradley Kauffman, Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship, Cincinnati, Ohio**

For the past 18 months the Resonate team (Mennonite Worship and Song Committee) has been working diligently to listen, study and pray around the work of creating a new hymnal.

With gratitude, we've mined the riches of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *Sing the Journey*, and *Sing the Story*. We've consulted Mennonite experts and ecumenical peers. We gathered hundreds of survey responses around what is important to Mennonites when we sing. We put out a call for new and original songs, written worship resources and visual art. In that span we received more than 2,250 submissions!

We have drafted a table of contents and devised countless processes that flow into a complicated and enthralling workstream. We have assembled networks of pastors, scholars and musicians who are lending significant aid from beyond our team. We promoted a Great Day of Singing across the Mennonite Church. We began one of numerous intercultural initiatives with the support of a grant from the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship. We've gathered for five in-person meetings and

countless web conferences.

We have laughed and cried together, broken bread, and been church to one another. The gifts of this thoughtful group of people are many, and the riches of the experience are difficult to relay, with so many holy moments.

Please pray for our team's ongoing work. The coming year will see a lot of conceptual work begin to focus around a tangible collection. Some of our work is outlined here by members of Central District Conference who are Resonate volunteers. We hope you and your congregation will continue to give generously to MennoMedia's capital campaign for the hymnal to make the completion of this work possible. Learn more at [MennoMedia.org/Resonate](http://MennoMedia.org/Resonate).

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Resonate committee members sing "Come, all you people" in a video posted on the MennoMedia channel on YouTube.

## Resonate (continued)

### Saejin Lee, Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Indiana

**A**mong my Resonate team responsibilities is serving on the Worship Resources Subcommittee that is attending to all resources that are not sung. These resources in past collections included written prayers and ritual practices that are part of worship. I'm very excited to share that, in addition to the written resources, we will include a series of visual art resources in the bound and electronic editions of the new collection.

In recent decades, North American Mennonite churches have developed new levels of respect for visual aspects of worship. We have become more connected with Christians in other times and places who worship in ways that engage sight as well as sound, and have become more aware of how diverse our communities are in terms of language and age, as well as ways of learning and expressing ourselves. In recognizing this development, in October 2017, the Resonate team announced a call for visual art submissions that are expressions of acts of worship, and a visual telling of God's story.

While exciting, the work of including visual art in the new collection is not without challenge. The most obvious example might be that we have some narrow technical guidelines to satisfy (i.e. the image of the work needs to be in black and white, 300 dpi, etc.). Needless to say, visual creativity is much broader than what can be included in a bound book or projected on a screen. We are grateful that artists have been creative within such constraints, and hope that we can reflect their work with integrity. With the open submissions phase closing at the end of February, we are grateful to report that we have received a number of promising submissions for consideration. Beginning in early March, the Visual Arts Committee will meet to look at the submissions and discuss the next steps.

I am incredibly excited to see how including the visual resources in our collection will be celebrated within our churches. In interacting with the art work, I hope that we can worship God with all of our senses—with our spirits and



Photo by J. Tyler Klassen

*Bradley Kauffman, project director and general editor of the Worship and Song Collection Committee, led a workshop at the 2017 CDC Annual Meeting in Bluffton, Ohio.*

minds, as well as our hearts and bodies. I also hope that we can honor artists who are vital part of our churches and recognize their work as important vehicles for experiencing God in creative and innovative ways.

### Adam Tice, Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana

**M**y role as text editor involves two major tasks: first is gathering new hymn and song texts for evaluation and consideration, and second is implementing the committee's approach to revising the language of hymns.

The gathering work involves a group of volunteer screeners from around the US and Canada who read through published collections of hymns. Most of these collections are screened by multiple readers. This process will sift a few hundred top picks from about four thousand options. Those top picks will form a pool that the committee will draw upon as we fill thematic sections of the collection.

Revising well-known and beloved texts is a task we approach with great care. My goal is that someone encountering a text for the first time would not be able to spot the revision. It should appear seamless, matching the style

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## Resonate (continued)

and substance of the original text. Of course, those for whom the text is well-known and beloved might trip over the change, and it will take some time to adapt. However, as with changes introduced in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, *The Mennonite Hymnal* (1969), and every other hymnal, eventually a majority of those changes will become familiar and natural. We are making changes when it is possible to do so with poetic integrity in order to keep hymns usable for future generations. At the same time, we are frequently leaving texts in their familiar form out of deference to the lived memory of our congregations. I have heard from people who are worried that we will damage their favorite hymns; I have also heard from people who hope we will update their favorites to make them more inclusive. We are trying to strike the right balance between the two approaches.

### Katie Graber, Columbus Mennonite Church, Columbus, Ohio

In addition to working on the text Subcommittee with Adam Tice and Tom Harder, I lead a subcommittee focused on caring for Intercultural Worship. We listen for the racial, cultural and linguistic diversity in Mennonite congregations in North America and around the world. We find songs in many languages in published collections, such as other denominational hymnals and Mennonite World Conference songbooks. Committee members have visited congregations in their areas and tapped personal connections to learn about different styles of worship and singing.

In addition to those efforts, our committee has received a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship for three members (myself, Bradley Kauffman and Darryl Neustaedter Barg) to visit Mennonite congregations across the US and Canada who worship in languages other than English. When we visit these groups, we have met with musicians and members who teach us songs and tell stories about the meaning of music and worship in their lives. So far, we have visited congregations that speak Cheyenne (a Native American group in Montana), Spanish (in Houston and Vancouver), Chin (a group from Myanmar, now in Houston),



*In a video posted in fall 2017 on the Resonate Facebook account, Katie Graber encouraged congregations to celebrate a Great Day of Singing. Resources included new songs, worship readings and art being considered for the new collection.*

and Korean (in Vancouver). From all of these sources, we are learning more about what resonates in Mennonite and other Christian worship across North America and around the world. We are encountering songs that we hope will feed the spiritual life of Mennonite Church USA and Canada.

It is challenging to keep in mind all the kinds of diversity we want to represent in the new song and worship collection—in addition to language and culture, we know that the congregations who use the new collection will be urban and rural, large and small; individuals will be of different ages, genders, races, abilities, family status, and in different places on different spiritual journeys. My hopes are that people can find words and music that speak directly to them, and that each individual will also have the grace to approach the unfamiliar with the assumption that it speaks to another of God's children. ☸

*Members of the Resonate Committee, in addition to Bradley Kauffman, Saejin Lee, Adam Tice and Katie Graber, are Benjamin Bergey, music editor; Sarah Kathleen Johnson, worship resources editor; Darryl Neustaedter Barg; Paul Dueck; Mike Erb; Emily Grimes; Tom Harder; Allan Rudy-Froese; Anneli Loepp Thiessen; and Cynthia Neufeld Smith.*

*Keep up-to-date with the work of the committee on the Resonate Facebook page:*

<https://www.facebook.com/ResonateMWSC/>

## Dis in my cup

by Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister

I've got a mug full of "dis-" on my desk and I really don't want to drink it. To be honest, I do sip from it on occasion, but it usually makes my tummy hurt and it leaves a bitter taste in



my mouth. I'm trying to give it up for Lent ... and forever.

"Dis-" is a negation, an un-doing, a prefix that turns something positive into something negative. The first time my son mentioned that someone had "dissed" him (it was probably me), I wasn't sure what

he was talking about. I think it is a fairly recent slang term, but my spell-checker recognized the word! But it does carry a powerful sentiment. It is no fun to be dissed, to be negated, to be ignored, to be discounted, dismissed, or disparaged.

A book that is on my desk, one that I've actually been reading, is *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*. It is written by Christena Cleveland. Christena is a social psychologist and a Christian who is deeply committed to the church of Jesus Christ. I heard her speak in 2017 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Christena identifies the natural, psychological and sociological reasons why we human beings flock around like-thinkers and those who view the world through a lens similar to our own. She also identifies reasons why like-minded thinkers "dis" those who think differently. In chapter eight on "Culture Wars," she identifies three triggers that keep us separated. She says that:

- "We hate ambiguity" and have a strong desire for "cognitive closure." We want answers, even if they are incomplete, rather than remaining in a state of ambiguity. As we approach Easter, I wonder if the ending of the Gospel of Mark would be an example of uncomfortable ambiguity. Matthew, Luke

and John each have numerous resurrection appearances of Jesus. But Mark's Gospel ends, "So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." How long can we sip on that mystery?

- "We hate black sheep." Black sheep, she says, are especially worrisome because they are really one of us but act like they are not one of us. We like in-group and out-group boundaries to be clear. We know how to manage members of the out-group. We are befuddled to know how to engage folks in our group who might have a different perspective on something that the rest of the group agrees upon. I think that is what got Jesus into so much trouble. As you hear again the Passion story, how was Jesus continually crossing boundaries and befuddling the people of his in-group?
- "We fear negative consequences." Christena says, "Within our culture of fear, our words and behavior are motivated by a desire to avoid being like a certain group, rather than a desire to be like Jesus." (p. 132). That sentence alone is worth the cost of the book!

I'm going to go dump my "dis" and find something sweet to drink. ☺

### 2018 CDC Annual Meeting

Location:

Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

Dates:

June 21-23

More information will be shared in the May issue of *Reporter*.

Camp Friedenswald sets goals for resilience and sustainability



Jenna Liechty Martin, Camp Friedenswald executive director, talks about recent improvements with a group of Camp supporters on March 15 at Silverwood Mennonite Church.

With renewed and enhanced facilities in place, Camp Friedenswald is continuing toward its goals of resilience and sustainability, Jenna Liechty Martin, executive director, told supporters at a gathering on March 15.

Jenna reviewed changes in the last year as well as goals for the next few years for more than 30 people gathered at Silverwood Mennonite Church in Goshen. One recurrent theme through her presentation was gratitude. New cabins and refurbished Sandhill Lodge (formerly the guest house) and Cottonwood Center (formerly the chapel) have made it possible for the camp to serve more people and in more comfortable accommodations.

“We really are appreciative of your generosity and support,” Jenna said. She noted that only \$37,000 is still needed to reach the \$2.1 million goal for the Campaign to Renew Friedenswald.

“In addition to financial support there has been an outpouring of volunteer support over the last year—really all through our history,” Jenna continued. Volunteers contributed more than 700 days in the last year, essentially equivalent to two full-time staff members every day of the year. “We couldn’t do it without you,”

Looking ahead, the camp staff and board have set goals for resilience and sustainability. The plan includes three areas: social, environmental and financial. Read more about these goals on the website: [friedenswald.org/about/resilience-sustainability-camp/](http://friedenswald.org/about/resilience-sustainability-camp/)

For the more immediate future, the camp is getting ready for its summer program. Jenna said they are always looking for more young adults to join the summer staff. Helping children and youth to come to camp is another way to support Friedenswald, she emphasized. For schedules, visit [friedenswald.org/summer-camps/](http://friedenswald.org/summer-camps/)

“We ask as always that you hold staff and campers in your prayers,” she concluded. “That is very much appreciated and it’s what sustains us.”

Financial report

July 1, 2017 to February 28, 2018

At the end of February, two-thirds of the way through our fiscal year, the financial picture of Central District conference remains quite positive. While giving from the congregations is a bit behind our plan, giving by families and individuals remains ahead of plan, and overall expenses are well below what we have budgeted. Thanks to all for your strong support of our conference.

Year-to-date giving	
from congregations . . . . .	\$115,525
Year-to-date plan . . . . .	\$128,833
Difference between giving and plan	-\$13,308
Year-to-date giving	
from individuals and families . . . . .	\$20,222
Year-to-date plan . . . . .	\$15,333
Difference between giving and plan	..\$4,889
Year-to-date expenses . . . . .	\$141,852
Year-to-date plan . . . . .	\$149,253
Difference between expenses	
and plan . . . . .	\$7,401

Report provided by Roger Nafziger, conference treasurer



## Installation



**Theda Good** (center left facing the camera) was installed as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, on February 11. Surrounding her are Wanda Stopher on the left; Dawn Kreider, Theda's wife; and Walt Paquin.

Photo by Fred Steiner.

## Journey participants



**Jan Croyle** (left). member of First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio, is the newest Central District Conference participant in *Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program* from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Participating with her are two mentors: **Cynthia Mason** is on the right in the photo; the other is Marilyn Rossiter.

For more on *Journey* and CDC's other participants, see the December issue of CDC's focus newsletter: [www.mcusacdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CDCfocus-Dec2017-color.pdf](http://www.mcusacdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CDCfocus-Dec2017-color.pdf)

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