

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' That word is the good news that was announced to you. —1 Peter 1:23-25

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

February 9, 2011

Please forward this newsletter to (or print it for) these congregational leaders:

Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Delegates to Central Plains Annual Meeting, Church Council, Christian Education committee, Mission & Service Committee, Convention 2011 participants, VBS planners.

For Your Prayers

Please pray:

- For Conference Council as they meet on February 12 in Milford, Nebraska.
- For the work team going to Arajuno, Ecuador, to build a church February 17 to 28.
- For the staff as they prepare for the March 12 event, [*That the World May Know: A Conference on Christian Unity*](#), and for the congregational leaders as they study the [Unity Paper](#) and plan to participate in the conference.
- For the mission and ministries of our conference and the funding to support them.
- For churches going through pastoral transitions and the conference leaders supporting them.

Finances

The Central Plains budget fell behind in January after experiencing good surpluses the past two months. Income totaled \$27,109.55. Expenses totaled \$33,079.30. This gave us a net loss for the month of \$5,969.75, which increased our overall net loss for the fiscal year to \$23,459.57. We are 9 months (75%) into our conference fiscal year and giving is at 62% of budget (\$492,284). Expenses are at 67% of budget (\$492,284). Please consider prayerfully what your congregation can give to support the work of Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

Staff News

The conference ministers will meet with six different pastor clusters in the next month to discuss the [Unity Paper](#). On Saturday, February 12, Conference Council meets in Milford, Nebraska. The following week, February 13-20, Dave and Shana will be on vacation. Tim will participate in the annual Montana Mennonite Ministers (3M) meeting February 18-22.

Register for [That the World May Know](#)

Invitations and registration brochures have been mailed for [That the World May Know: A Conference on Christian Unity on Saturday, March 12](#), from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at First Christian Church, Des Moines. Note that we've moved the start time from 8:30 to 9 a.m. The leaders of every Central Plains congregation are encouraged to attend this important time of Bible study and discernment. If you have misplaced your invitation or registration brochure, find them at www.centralplainsmc.org. The registration deadline is Wednesday, March 2.

Next *Scattered Seeds* is online now

The February 2011 issue of the *Scattered Seeds* [is already posted online](#). Paper copies will be mailed to churches in the next week or so.

Road Signs for the Journey workshop

The Nebraska Pastor Cluster is hosting Conrad Kanagy, author of [*Road Signs for the Journey: A Profile of Mennonite Church USA*](#). He will give a workshop, [From Reality to Hope: Road Signs for the Journey](#), at [Bellwood Mennonite Church](#), Milford, Nebraska, on Friday evening, February 25, and Saturday, February 26. Participants will explore the current status of the church, develop a vision for where God is leading us, examine roadblocks to ministry and kingdom growth and identify specific steps your church can take. Kanagy will preach and lecture at [Bethesda Mennonite Church](#), Henderson, Nebraska, on Sunday and Monday, February 27 and 28. A [registration brochure has been posted](#) on the Central Plains home page.

Nebraska Women's Retreat

The Nebraska Mennonite Women's Retreat will be held on March 5-6, 2011, at The Leadership Center in Aurora, NE. The speaker for the weekend will be Diane Zaerr Brenneman, Central Plains Mennonite Conference Moderator. Her theme will be "Finding Joy in our Lives." Registration forms were distributed to Nebraska churches. Contact Glenda Maury at gmmaury@yahoo.com for registration information. Come and share a relaxing and inspiring weekend with your Christian sisters!

Pastor Opening

Mercy Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is looking for an associate pastor with responsibility for youth ministry. Interested persons should contact [Tim Detweiler](#) (see contact info below). Applicants must fill out the Ministerial Leadership Information Form (MLI). Get one at <http://www.mennoniteusa.org/Portals/0/MLI/default.asp>. For a full job description, contact Shel Boese, pastor at Mercy Church, at shel@mercy-church.org.

Check out samples of the new VBS curriculum

The Summer 2011 VBS curriculum was created by a team from **Central Plains!** Be sure to check out sample sessions of *Taste & See: God is Good*, at www.mpn.net/vbs.

Resources on health and healing from the WDC Resource Library

Toward Health, Hope and Healing is the theme of the [February, 2011 Check It Out](#) from the Western District Conference Resource Library. Featured are resources on church-based health ministries, responses to domestic violence, terrorism and catastrophe and info on how faith communities can work towards ending child abuse and neglect. Find this listing on our website at www.mennowdc.org. —*Marlene Bogard, WDC Resource Library Director*

Mennonite Church USA Convention

Reminder to those congregations that have not sent a delegate to one of the last four Mennonite Church USA conventions (2003- 2009): **the convention office is offering to waive the registration fee** for your delegate(s) to attend Pittsburgh 2011! To learn more, please contact Carol Epp at 866-866-2872 or CarolE@mennoniteusa.org.

Go to the [Convention 2011 website](#) for an amazing amount of information to help you plan.

Volunteer opportunity at Mennohof

Looking for a way to serve while sharing your faith? Menno-Hof in Shipshewana, Ind., needs individuals and couples in agreement with Anabaptist values and beliefs to serve as host and/or hostess during July and August 2011. Responsibilities include conducting tours and some light housekeeping. Menno-Hof offers visitors from around the world accurate information about the faith and life of the Amish and Mennonites. For more information contact Susan Miller, managing director: 260-768-4117 or smiller@mennohof.org

Upcoming Events

Conference Council meets Saturday, February 12, 2011, in Milford, Nebraska

Road Signs for the Journey workshop with Conrad Kanagy, February 25-26, 2011 at Bellwood Mennonite, Milford, Nebraska

That the World May Know: A Conference on Christian Unity Saturday, March 12, 2011, First Christian Church, Des Moines

Pastor/Spouse Gathering, Sunday-Tuesday, April 10-12, 2011 in Schuyler, Nebraska

Central Plains Annual Meeting Thursday-Sunday, June 16-19, 2011 Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) training, Wed-Sun, June 22-26, 2011, Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Sower is published the second Wednesday of each month for Central Plains pastors, delegates, conference leaders and other interested persons. Please include items from this newsletter in your church bulletins and newsletters. Find back issues at www.centralplainsmc.org. Click on Publications.

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Central Plains Mennonite Conference leads congregations as they proclaim and become a sign of God's reconciling work in the world.