

*He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." --Matthew 13:31-32*

# The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

June 8, 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, Youth Sponsors

## For Your Prayers

**Please pray:**

- That Annual Meeting will be a place where Central Plains can practice wise discernment over controversial matters so that, like the early church in Jerusalem, we can exhibit signs of the unity Jesus taught for the sake of the gospel.
- For our speaker, Juanita Nunez, and her husband Eligio, as they prepare to join us.
- That William and Luz Valencia and Josue Noriega will get their visas in time to come to the Ecuador Partnership meetings. They all were refused on their first interview, and have their second interviews just days before their flights, which have already been paid for.
- For the Ecuador Partnership meeting on Sunday, June 19.

## Finances

We started the new conference fiscal year with a deficit. Income in May totaled \$25,030.83 and expenses totaled \$35,952.04 for a net loss of \$10,392.44. On a positive note, this is a few thousand dollars less than the net loss we experienced the start of the conference fiscal year last year.

One month into the fiscal year, we are 8.3% through the year and giving is at 5% of the spending blueprint (\$492,359). Expenses are also below this mark at 7% of the blueprint.

## Staff News

Shana, Dave and Tim plan to go to Julesburg, Colorado, the weekend of June 11 and 12 to attend the celebration of Pastor Art Roth's **50 years** of ministry there. We look forward to seeing everyone gather together in Moline, Illinois, June 16-19 for Annual Meeting. Dave will join the Ecuador Partnership meeting on Sunday, June 19. Tim will be in Freeman, South Dakota, the weekend of June 26.

## Getting Ready for Annual Meeting

If you haven't registered yet, now is the time! Get registration materials from your church office or find them on the Annual Meeting 2011 page at [www.centralplainsmc.org](http://www.centralplainsmc.org).

## Come ready to put your knot in the comforter

Monica Clem has made a comforter out of the fabric blocks that we used as table decorations at the Unity Conference in March. At Annual Meeting, everyone will have the opportunity to say a prayer,

write it down and tie a knot in the comforter. The comforter and the written prayers will be given to the Quito Mennonite Church to be placed in the home they provide for Colombian refugees. The name of the pattern is "Good Morning Starshine." A coordinating pillowcase and a throw pillow complete the set. Thank you, Monica, for this beautiful idea and all you have done to make it a reality!

### **New resources available at Annual Meeting**

*Growing Deeper* is a packet of ideas and helps for parents as they nurture faith at home. This packet of ideas, which includes the book *Sleeping with Bread*, will be placed in the brown bags delegates take home to their congregations. The Congregational Ministries Committee intends for this book and packet to be put into your church library. A bulletin announcement will accompany the packet, which you can use to explain and promote the material in your congregation.

*Mission Possible* is the curriculum for a mid-week kids club that was introduced in the April issue of *Scattered Seeds*. Look for the workshop at Annual Meeting introducing this material.

### **No pastor workshop**

There will be no workshop for pastors prior to Annual Meeting, as there sometimes has been in the past.

### **Another tool to nurture faith at home: the *new* Talkabout**

Have you seen the new Talkabout materials for Gather 'Round? Talk about impressive! A CD or download gives you monthly calendars, take-home leaflets, Bible commentary, prayers, and activities for use at home. There are even ready-to-go bulletin announcements to explain them to your families. You need only **one per congregation**, then print copies for each family. [See for yourself](#), and be sure the Talkabout is ordered with your curriculum ([www.gatherround.org](http://www.gatherround.org)). If you want to equip parents to nurture faith at home, you want to see this!

### **From the WDC Library**

"Come to the Banquet" is the special 2011 summer edition of **Check It Out** from the Western District Conference Resource Library. This list includes way more than recipes - they feature ideas on hospitality, "just" eating, nourishing our spiritual hunger and grace for mealtime. Some featured titles include: *Soul Banquets: how meals become mission in the local congregation*; *Whatever Happened to Dinner?* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*. Check out this listing at [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org); print it out and share this banquet of fine books! --Marlene Bogard, director / 316-283-6300 / [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org)

### **Readings bring Anabaptist leaders to life**

[Anabaptist Dramatic Readings](#) bring to life the colorful personalities of Michael Sattler, Menno Simons, Margaret Hellwart and others as they deal with state authorities and Anabaptists with opposing viewpoints. Alan and Eleanor Kreider, former Mennonite Mission Network workers, originally developed the readings for use by Anabaptist Study Groups in England. At the request of Mennonite Education Agency and Mennonite Schools Council, the Kreiders have prepared them for wider distribution. Find them online at [www.MennoniteEducation.org/Readings](http://www.MennoniteEducation.org/Readings).

### **No Sower in July**

There will be no July 2011 edition of *The Sower* due to the timing of Mennonite Church USA Convention.

## Upcoming Events

**Central Plains Annual Meeting** Thursday-Sunday, June 16-19, 2011 Moline, Illinois.

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

**Mennonite Church USA Convention and Delegate Assembly**, Monday – Friday, July 4-8, 2011, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**Pastoral Leadership Committee** meets Friday, August 19

**Consultation on Children's Ministry**, Saturday, October 15 at Hidden Acres Christian Center, Dayton, Iowa

**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](http://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.