

...but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. --Galatians 6:8b-10

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

November 9, 2011

Growing in holistic witness to God's reconciling mission in the world through fellowship, discipleship and leadership.

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

Pastors, Elders/Deacons, Church Chair/Moderator, Treasurer, Christian Education/Nurture Chair, Delegates to Central Plains Annual Meeting, Choir Director

For Your Prayers (weekly bulletin announcements)

Here are weekly prayer requests for each week between now and the next issue of *The Sower*. Please share them with your congregation by whichever method works best, whether it be in your bulletin, in the pastoral prayer or some other way. We welcome your suggestions on how to share these prayer requests. *Thank you!*

For Sunday, November 13

On Friday and Saturday, the Central Plains Conference Board and committees will meet at Swan Lake Christian Camp near Viborg, South Dakota. Pray that God's will be done as they focus on strategic planning and aligning conference structures to fulfill the mission that God has given us.

For Sunday, November 20

Earlier this month, Aaron Carlson was licensed toward ordination at Manson Mennonite Church, Manson, Iowa. Aaron and his wife, Molly, moved to Manson in May and welcomed their first child in August. Pray that the Carlsons and the congregation will incarnate true Christian community.

For Sunday, November 27

Pray for God's guidance and presence as Dave Boshart and Tim Detweiler attend the annual gathering of conference ministers this week, and for the Youth Escape 2012 Planning Committee as they meet on Saturday to plan the August 3-5 youth retreat.

For Sunday, December 4

Pray for Salem Mennonite Church, Shickley, Nebraska, and pastor Shawn Nolt, as they discern the ministries to which God is calling them. Recently, they invited Will Ortman, a farmer from Freeman, South Dakota, to lead them in a workshop on "finding solutions to the rural predicament."

For Sunday, December 11

Pray for Central Plains transitional ministers: George O'Reilly serving at Salem Mennonite in Freeman, SD; James Lapp and Miriam Book serving at Bethesda Mennonite in Henderson, NE; and Gordon Scoville serving at Wood River Mennonite in Wood River, NE. Pray that these times of transition can bring renewal and clarity for the ongoing ministries of these congregations.

Finances

We experienced another negative month in October with income falling short of the normal activity of expenses. Income was higher overall at \$34,608.81, but this included a capital withdrawal from the savings account as called for in the spending blueprint. Total expenses were \$40,540.92. This resulted in a monthly deficit of \$5,932.11. We are half-way through the conference's fiscal year and the overall deficit has grown to \$57,254.29. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

November 13 Tim Detweiler will officiate at the licensing of Aaron Carlson, pastor at Manson (IA) Mennonite.

15 Blaine Friesen and Dave and Shana Boshart will attend Annual Meeting Task Group at Manson, Iowa.

18-19 All staff will attend the conference board and committee meetings at Swan Lake Christian Camp, Viborg, South Dakota.

27 Tim preaches at Templo Alabanza, Moline, Illinois.

November 30-December 3 Tim and Dave attend the annual conference ministers meeting in Toronto, Ontario.

Family Devotions for Advent

Advent is a great time for families to have regular family worship

Again this year, there is a devotional book for families to use at home from Advent through Epiphany which follows the texts and themes of the worship materials in [Leader magazine](#). This wonderful resource includes worship ideas, pondering questions, prayers and activities all suitable for the home. Whether or not your worship planners use the Advent materials from Leader, you will want to print this out for the families in your church. Find it at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/23/6521>. Also download the story of Jesus birth that is written for very young children as a daily ritual leading up to Christmas.

Could you use Jubilee materials?

The St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship has several quarters of gently used Jubilee Sunday School material for middler and junior high age groups. They will mail these materials to any congregation that wants them. Contact Helen at Helen.W.OBrien@healthpartners.com.

From the WDC Library

Wish you had dozens (hundreds, actually) of options for choral music for Advent and Christmas? Check out the on-line catalog of the Western District Conference Music Lending Library at: <http://mennowdc.org/library/music-library/> and search by title, composer and more. Once you see what is available, make your request known to Marlene Bogard at crlib@mennowdc.org. I will be happy to pack up multiple copies of the sheet music and send it to your door. Isn't networking grand? --*Marlene Bogard, director / 316-283-6300 /*

Young Adult Retreat at Swan Lake

Swan Lake Christian Camp invites young adults, post high school to age 26, for our first ever Young Adult Retreat December 18-20. Adam Sieff will be our speaker. His specialty is using hip-hop to tell God's story and our relationship with God. Registration deadline is December 5. Email Renee Neufeld at programdirector@myslcc.com for more information.

Seminary offers discount for online courses

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is offering a 50 percent tuition discount to students taking their first online course from AMBS who are not already enrolled in any theological education program. Two online courses are offered from AMBS for spring 2011: Biblical Foundations of

Peace and Justice and Turnaround Strategies for Churches. To learn more and register for a course, visit www.ambs.edu/academics/courses.

Webinars from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)

Identity crisis in the pulpit: What is the preacher's purpose and authority? presented by Ryan Ahlgrim on Wednesday, November 16 from 1:00–2:30 p.m. CST. [Get details and register by November 12.](#)

Reforming Anabaptism: Recent North American Experiments in Discipleship, presented by Joanna Shenk on Thursday, December 1 from 1:00-2:30 p.m. CST. [Get details and register by November 27.](#)

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Upcoming Events

Conference Board and Committees meet Friday and Saturday, November 18 and 19 at Swan Lake Christian Camp, Viborg, SD
Young Adult Retreat, Sunday through Tuesday, December 18-20 at Swan Lake Christian Camp, Viborg, South Dakota
Central Plains Annual Meeting, Thursday through Sunday, June 28 – July 1, 2012, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, NE
Youth Escape 2012, Friday through Sunday, August 3-5, 2012, at Hidden Acres Christian Center, Dayton, IA

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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The mission of Central Plains Mennonite Conference is to create settings for our congregations and partners to grow in holistic witness to God's reconciling mission in the world by developing leadership, encouraging fellowship and promoting lifelong discipleship.