

If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

February 8, 2012

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 or Deacons, Central Plains Delegates, Church Moderator, Treasurer, Christian Education Chair, Worship Committee, Youth Sponsors

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, February 12

Pray for the family of Mick and Julie Murray who lost their lives in a car accident February 4. They are survived by four children, Brittany, 20; Nicole, 18; Chase, 16; and Jordan, 14. Mick co-pastored Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church with Scott Swartzendruber for 17 years. Pray for Scott and his wife Jan and the congregation as they grieve.

For Sunday, February 19

On Saturday, February 25, congregational leadership teams from across Central Plains will gather in Manson, Iowa, to study biblical power and authority with J. Nelson Kraybill. Pray that they will learn much from the biblical study and be equipped with practical ideas that enable the church's mission.

For Sunday, February 26

From February 23 to March 5, 13 people from Central Plains are working and visiting in Ecuador. The group will continue construction of a church building at Arajuno, working alongside brothers from the churches in Quito and Colombia. Pray for good fellowship and safe travel.

For Sunday, March 4

Continue to pray for Kalona Mennonite Church and Pastor Scott Swartzendruber as they grieve the loss of Mick and Julie Murray and discern the way forward with regard to leadership of the church.

For Sunday, March 11

Pray for the Central Plains Conference Board and committees meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, on Friday and Saturday. The board and each committee will meet separately on Friday, followed by a workshop for everyone led by Iris deLeon Hartshorn on intercultural transformation.

Finances

Central Plains experienced another positive month in January. Income for the month was at \$35,062.71. Expenses came in at \$32,783.39. This provided a net gain for the month of \$2,279.32. As a result of this great news, we have converted the fiscal year deficit to a net positive of \$335.51. We are very blessed to witness the continued support shown in this way. Thank you! Three months remain in the conference's fiscal year which ends April 30. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

12 Tim and Dave will officiate at the licensing of Steve Nelson at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church near Kalona.
18-19 Dave will preach at special meetings at Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Nebraska.
26 Tim will preach at Sermon on the Mount in Sioux Falls; Dave will preach at Salem Mennonite near Freeman, South Dakota.
March 3 Shana will meet with the Youth Escape Planning Committee at Hidden Acres Christian Center near Dayton, Iowa.
4 Dave will officiate at the licensing of Amanda Beachy at Washington (Iowa) Mennonite Church.
7-10 Shana will attend Youth Ministry Council and Convention Planning Committee in Phoenix, Arizona.

We grieve the loss of Mick and Julie Murray

Find information about the accident that took the lives of Mick and Julie Murray on the Central Plains [web site](#) or [Facebook page](#). The evening of the accident, church members spontaneously began to gather at the church. David Boshart was able to join them for a brief prayer service. The next morning, Tim Detweiler led worship and David preached the sermon at Kalona Mennonite. Scott Swartzendruber gave a brief message of hope and encouragement. These two services were recorded and can be found at the [Kalona Mennonite Church](#) web site.

A memorial service is planned for 10:30 a.m. Saturday morning, February 11, at Mid-Prairie High School. A memorial fund has been established at [Hills Bank](#) for the children. [The Yoder-Powell Funeral Home](#) is in charge of arrangements.

The conference board has been planning to meet on Saturday, February 11, but will instead meet by conference call on Monday evening, February 13.

2012 Congregational Leaders Workshop

It's time to register for "The Paradox of Power: Biblical Foundations of Authority," a training event for pastors, elders and deacons with J. Nelson Kraybill, president emeritus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. This one-day workshop will take place on Saturday, February 25, 2012, at Manson Mennonite Church, Manson, Iowa. Find the registration brochure at <http://tiny.cc/u3rde>. The cost is \$25 per person.

Input will consist of two parts: 1) a study of power and authority in the Bible and 2) practical training for leadership teams that applies the biblical principles. This topic is relevant for church leaders at all levels, so any interested church leader may attend. There will be exercises for elder/deacon groups to work on as a team. Those attending as individuals will meet in ad hoc groups for these exercises. **February 9** is the registration deadline.

Nominations needed for two positions

The Discernment Committee asks for your assistance in nominating people to fill two positions for the ballot at Annual Meeting in June. We need an at-large member of the Conference Board, preferably from Minnesota, and one person for the Discernment Committee, preferably from Nebraska. Send your nominations to Nathan Luitjens at assistantmoderator@centralplainsmc.org.

Please add these dates to your congregation's calendar

June 28 - July 1 Central Plains Annual Meeting at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.
August 3 - 5 Youth Escape 2012 at Hidden Acres Christian Center, Dayton, Iowa

Ecuador Fellowship and Service Tour

Thirteen people from Central Plains will travel to Ecuador from February 23 to March 5 to participate in a Fellowship and Service Tour. The group will continue construction of the church building at Arajuno. Members of the group are Doyle Roth, Ben Ramirez, Gabe Ramirez, and Nate Reil from Milford Mennonite; Jason Stahl, John Burkey, Jason Burkey, and John Goertzen from

Bellwood Mennonite; Matt Koehler and Dave Roth from Beth-El Mennonite; Paul Von Tersh from Sugar Creek Mennonite; and Russ Roth and Shawn Roth from Christ's Place in Lincoln.

David Shenk and Darwin Villacís, leaders from the Quito church, plan to participate, as well as two others from Mennonite Church of Colombia.

Youth Escape 2012: Plugged In and Charging!

We are constantly plugged in to something. We are texting, on Facebook, playing video games.... But when do we intentionally plug into God, the Source of life? Come to Youth Escape 2012 August 3-5 and explore creative ways to plug into God's presence and recharge our souls.

In breakout sessions and in worship times, you'll have a chance to experience quiet time with God, and to learn specific ways to pray. We'll do all kinds of prayer practices throughout the weekend, using art, journaling, nature, singing, eating, stories, doubts...a variety ways of nurturing our spirits in God's presence.

From the WDC Library

Check out our brand new [on-line catalog!](#) If you have a library card—and you can easily get one for free—you may review which items you have checked out, when they are due, renew them, or make reserves. You can also fill a “book bag” with items you may want to check out in the future. If you are not a registered library patron, call or email to become one. We offer **FREE** library cards to regular attenders of Central Plains Mennonite Conference congregations. —*Marlene Bogard, director / 316-283-6300*

AMBS Webinars

What's Mennonite about the missional church? presented by Lois Barrett, Ph.D., Thursday, March 8, 2012, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. CST. [Get details and register by March 4.](#)

A new frontier: Doing theology as thriving rural communities presented by **David Boshart, Ph.D.**, Wednesday, March 21, 2012, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. CST. [Get details and register by March 17.](#)

AMBS webinars cost \$45 if you register at least four days in advance. After that, the cost is \$55. Registration closes at noon the day before the webinar.

Vibrant Faith Webinars

In February and March, Vibrant Faith Ministries is offering quite a few webinars related to faith formation in the home and in the congregation. See www.vibrantfaith.org/webinars.html for a list of webinars, which range in cost from free to \$49.95 and are offered at 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. weekdays.

Mediation Skills Training Institute coming to Omaha

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center is leading their **Mediation Skills Training Institute** near Omaha, Nebraska, July 9 – 13, 2012. This five-day training institute is designed to equip leaders with the skills necessary to deal effectively with interpersonal, congregational and other forms of group conflict. You will also gain useful perspectives on conflict transformation and family systems thinking and strategies aimed at improving your ability to transform conflict constructively. The registration cost is \$695 if paid by June 8, 2012. This is a great opportunity for you to attend this training institute close to home. Having attended this institute in Dallas, Texas, this past year, I commend it to you. Feel free to call me if you have further questions. —*Tim Detweiler*

Listen and be inspired

At 78, Walter Brueggemann has never been better. He was the keynote speaker at Eastern Mennonite Seminary's School for Leadership Training last month. Speaking on the narratives of

accumulation, abundance and conflict, Brueggemann said, “A society that does not practice Sabbath is a society of depleted selves. And the less self I have the more I want to surround myself with signs and symbols of value to keep persuading myself that there is something good going on in my life even if it is relatively empty at the center.”

You can listen to these engaging lectures at <http://tiny.cc/8j4tb>. David Boshart says, “The lectures are as fun to listen to as they are full of wisdom. I highly recommend listening to the podcasts if you were unable to attend this event.”

Upcoming Events

Conference Board meets by conference call sometime the week of February 13.

Nebraska Women’s Retreat March 3&4 at the Leadership Center in Aurora, Nebraska. Register with sharonforr@gmail.com.

Conference Board and Committees meet Friday and Saturday, March 16 and 17 at Omaha, Nebraska

The Paradox of Power: Biblical Foundations of Authority, Saturday, February 25 at Manson Mennonite Church, Manson, Iowa

Central Plains Annual Meeting, Thursday through Sunday, June 28 – July 1, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Mediation Skills Training Institute, Monday through Friday, July 9-13, at Judson Baptist Church, LaVista, Nebraska

Youth Escape 2012, Friday through Sunday, August 3-5, 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.