

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it. "Hear then the parable of the sower. --Matthew 13:16-18

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

January 19, 2011

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

Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Delegates to Central Plains Annual Meeting, Christian Education committee, Mission & Service Committee, Church Council

For Your Prayers

Please pray:

- For Dave and Shana Peachey Boshart in the passing of Shana's father, [Elam Peachey](#).
- For the staff and committees as they discern how to implement a new, more effective conference structure.
- 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

Monthly Update

December was a very good month for the Central Plains fiscal year budget. Income totaled \$66,900.04, just below April's highest mark for the year of \$67,670. Expenses totaled \$33,271.03. This gave us a net gain of \$33,271.03 and significantly brings down our fiscal year deficit to \$17,489.87. We are 75% or 8 months into our conference fiscal year and giving is at 57% of budget (\$492,284). Expenses are at 60% of budget. We also added \$1,100 into our cash reserve fund from special congregational giving. We are thankful for this very positive month. Please consider prayerfully what your congregation can give to support the work of Central Plains conference.

Staff News

Tim Detweiler is at [Eastern Mennonite Seminary's](#) School for Leadership Training this week, January 17-20. Both Tim and Dave Boshart will be at Pastor's Week at [Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary](#) next week, January 24-27. Shana Boshart will participate in a five-year review of [Mennonite Mission Network's](#) Christian Service department January 25-27 in Kansas City. Dave will attend a "Missional Church Think Tank" hosted by [Church Innovations](#) January 30-February 1.

Plan to attend our Conference on Christian Unity

Conference leaders invite the leaders of every Central Plains congregation to **[That the World May Know: A Conference on Christian Unity on Saturday, March 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.](#)** (location not yet determined). The purpose of this meeting is to recover a biblical view of unity and to discern commitments we can hold in common as we seek to follow Jesus in many places within Central Plains Mennonite Conference. A letter of invitation will come to you soon. Click on Unity Discussion at www.centralplainsmc.org for more information.

Planning for Central Plains Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting Task Group met January 14 in Moline, Illinois, to plan Central Plains Annual Meeting 2011. Our hosts will be the Central Plains Spanish churches in the Quad Cities and Eastern Iowa. The Thursday opening worship and Sunday worship will take place at Templo Alabanza church, also in Moline. Delegate sessions will be held at the [Ramada Airport & Conference Center](#). Our speaker will be Juanita Nunez, a pastor and member of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. On Saturday night, her husband, Eligio Nunez, will present a music concert at Templo Alabanza. **Mark your calendar to come to Moline June 16-19** for a wonderful time of fellowship and learning.

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 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 brochure has been posted on the Central Plains web site.

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 Brennehan, 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!

Ecuador Partnership: Work Team update

Doyle Roth, work team coordinator, writes: "Our work team will be going to Arajuno Ecuador, which is located in the Amazon rainforest where the annual rainfall is 12 feet. We will be working on the church building we started there last year. We will leave for Ecuador on February 17 and return February 28. There will be ten people from the United States, two from Colombia, plus Dave Shenk who just started a two-year term in Quito, and Ipuz Rozembert from Colombia, who is serving a one-year term in Riobamba. (For more details see www.centralplainsmc.org.)

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.

Resource Lists from the WDC Resource Library

Need resources on Visioning and Strategic Planning? How about Reclaiming Biblical Literacy? Or Catechism and Faith Exploration? Find lists of wonderful resources on these topics at the [WDC Resource Library web page](#). Other lists: Children with Special Needs, Immigration, Scripture

Memory for Kids, Ethics and End-of-Life Issues, and Wednesday Night Live: Low Prep Ideas for Youth Group. (<http://www.mennondc.org/ResourceLists.html>)

Mennonite Church USA Convention

Online registration for Mennonite Church USA Convention begins January 25, 2011. Housing reservations may be made online starting February 1, 2011. This one-week difference will give you time to enter your registration information accurately before moving into the housing reservation system. Go to www.mennoniteusa.org and click on Convention for any info you might need! Click on [Forms & Resources](#) for such things delegate info, forms, Pittsburgh info, youth sponsor info, schedules, even info on getting tax exempt status in Pennsylvania.

Never had delegates? For those congregations that would like to send delegates to the Pittsburgh 2011 Delegate Assembly, but have not sent a delegate to one of the last four Mennonite Church USA conventions (Atlanta 2003, Charlotte 2005, San Jose 2007 or Columbus 2009), the convention office is offering to waive the registration fee for your delegate(s) to attend Pittsburgh 2011! For more information about how to obtain a waiver of registration fees, please contact Carol Epp at 866-866-2872 or CarolE@mennoniteusa.org.

Vacation Bible School curriculum

The Summer 2011 VBS curriculum was created by a team from Central Plains. Be sure to check it out! Browse sample sessions of *Taste & See: God is Good*, at www.mpn.net/vbs. Also find a daily overview chart with Bible texts, free graphics, an order form and more. *Taste & See: God is Good* will help children look at food through the eyes of faith. As they hear stories of manna in the wilderness, a woman who shares her last bit of food, or Jesus offering himself as bread and wine, kids will learn about gratitude, generosity and spiritual food—and how food is a constant reminder of God’s active presence in our midst!

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, location to be determined

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

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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.

Several items did not fit into this edition of *The Sower* and can be found under **What’s New** at www.centralplainsmc.org.