

He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how." —Mark 4:26-27

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

May 8, 2013

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, Youth Sponsors, Church Librarian, Missions Committee, Worship Committee

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. *Thank you!*

For Sunday, May 12

Pray for Nate Larson, associate pastor at Mercy Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as he is licensed toward ordination today. Pray for a fruitful ministry for Nate and Mercy Church.

For Sunday, May 19

Pray for Tim and Carol Detweiler and the Ecuador churches as they gather this weekend for a retreat near Quito. Pray that the Detweilers' time with the Ecuador churches will be fruitful.

For Sunday, May 26

Pray for Central Plains congregations in pastor searches. Pray for patience and a Spirit-led process for each congregation searching for pastoral leadership.

For Sunday, June 2

Pray for everyone who is preparing for Central Plains Annual Meeting, that our gathering would be a time we may together grow as a community that is "guided by the Spirit, knowing God's love."

For Sunday, June 9

Pray for the Conflict Management Support Team as they discern direction for educating and resourcing our conference about conflict mediation and transformation.

Finance Update

Central Plains experienced a very positive month in April to end the year in the black. Income for April was \$34,684.36, the 6th largest income month in the last twelve. Expenses came in at \$18,682.55. This very high surplus of \$16,001.81 for the month helped to create an overall surplus of \$2,986.24 for the Conference fiscal year. We are appreciative of all the continued support. Thank you! —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

May 5 Dave will preach at Zion Mennonite, Donnellson, Iowa, and Tim will preach at First Mennonite, Mountain Lake, Minnesota

May 7-10 Shana will attend MC USA Youth Ministry Council at Amigo Center, Sturgis, Michigan.

May 12 Tim will license Nate Larson for ministry at Mercy Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

May 14-20 Dave and Shana will be on vacation.

May 19 Tim, Dave and Shana will visit the Woodland Hills congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota, for a Q&A about Mennonites.

May 21 & 22 Dave and Shana will give leadership to the Iowa Ecumenical Leaders Retreat.

May 22-31 Tim and Carol Detweiler will be in Quito, Ecuador, to speak at the retreat of our Ecuadoran partner churches.

June 9 Tim will preach at Bethel in Wayland, Iowa, and Dave will preach at Wood River (Nebraska) Mennonite Church.

Annual Meeting: Please register soon

Please don't put off registering for Annual Meeting! Everything goes more smoothly for our office manager when we register early, plus you have the peace of mind, knowing you've done it! Registration forms and all the info you need are available from your church office and on the web site.

Remember, you can check out the book, *A History of the Cheyenne People*, or the 22-minute *Forgive and Remember* DVD by contacting Shana Peachey Boshart (shanaboshart@centralplainsmc.org or 319-936-5905). Check the Annual Meeting page at www.centralplainsmc.org for updates, info for youth delegates and registration materials.

Response of conference board from regional meetings

On April 24, a letter was mailed to every congregation and regional meeting participant. You can find the letter, a summary of themes from the counsel received, and many other resources on our web site. You'll find it here: [Resources](#) → [Discernment](#) → [When we disagree](#).

Who are the leaders among your youth?

At the Phoenix 2013 convention this summer, one of the many significant learning tracks will offer leadership development for high school students. This learning track is modeled on the Values Based Leadership Program (VBLP). Students **who are nominated by their pastor or sponsor** will be taught principles of excellent leadership through an Anabaptist faith lens. Shana Peachey Boshart is on the planning group for this activity and encourages you to nominate one, two or three youth from your congregation. Confer with your youth sponsors, let the youth know you'd like to nominate them, then send the following information to BethH@MennoniteUSA.org: the name of your congregation, the names of the youth, and their email addresses. If you have questions about this activity, Shana will be happy to answer them via phone or email. [For more information read this article.](#)

Advent Planning Workshop

The team of writers from Central Plains who wrote the Advent planning materials for the Fall 2013 Leader magazine will offer a workshop to pastors and worship planning committees on Saturday, September 7. The writers are Michelle Hofer, Todd Jones, S. Roy Kaufman, Sherilyn Ortman, and Lois Janzen Preheim, all of Freeman, South Dakota. They will demonstrate the worship rituals, dramas, music, children's stories and visuals in this one-day workshop sponsored by the Christian Formation Committee. Mark your calendars now; more information will be coming.

Are you doing the 12 Scriptures Project?

Check out our [12 Scriptures web page](#) for ideas and inspiration. Then, please remember to send *your* Top 12 Scriptures to Shana Peachey Boshart so we can add your list to the web page.

Call to prayer for Quito Mennonite Church

The Ecuador Partnership is calling on the churches of Central Plains to a season of prayer. The Quito Mennonite Church is now renting space for worship and ministries, and they would like to invest in a facility they would own. Please pray for God's leading in discernment regarding future facilities for the church and its ministries. To see five specific prayer requests, see the [Ecuador Partnership page at www.centralplainsmc.org](http://www.centralplainsmc.org).

Going Green in the WDC Resource Library

We are celebrating spring by promoting "green resources," those that emphasize caring for God's creation. Use some of these resources for a topical study on creation care, stewardship of the earth, leaving a small carbon footprint, the spirituality of going green, eco-friendly lifestyle, a church retreat, a "green" worship service, recycled crafts for kids, much more. If you search our on-line catalog at www.mennowdc.org for "Environment," you will get 109 DVD's and books. Call us at [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300) or email crlib@mennowdc.org. Plan a discussion, retreat, summer project now!

Stay where you are and go to seminary with "MDiv Connect"

A new Master of Divinity program will begin at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in August, giving students options for study from a distance as well as on campus. "MDiv Connect" includes online courses and hybrid courses, which involve both online and on-campus learning.

Students entering the program will come to AMBS for orientation in August. Then over the course of five and a half years, they should plan to make two annual week-long visits to campus for classes, spiritual formation and vocational discernment.

The new MDiv will comprise 80 credit hours, a reduction of ten from previous requirements.

More details are available at <http://www.ambs.edu>, and from the AMBS admissions office, admissions@ambs.edu.

Upcoming Events

Central Plains Annual Meeting will be Thursday through Sunday, June 20-23, at Ashland, Montana.

Mennonite Church USA Assembly and Youth Convention will take place July 1-6, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Advent Planning Workshop, Saturday, September 7, location to be announced.

Youth Escape 2014 will take place the weekend of August 1-3, 2014, in central 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. 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.