

Attached: Dove's Nest flyer, Delegate info

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

October 22, 2014

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, Church Librarian, Missions Committee, 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. *Thank you!*

For Sunday, October 26

Pray for Julesburg (Colorado) Mennonite Church as they install a new pastor, Jack Norris, next Sunday. Pray for Jack and the congregation as they begin to minister together as witnesses to God's reign in Julesburg.

For Sunday, November 2

Next Sunday, Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard will be ordained at Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, South Dakota. Pray for God's guidance and blessing on Nick and South Church as they continue in ministry together.

For Sunday, November 9

Pray for Central Plains conference board and committees who will meet together at Crooked Creek Christian Camp near Washington, Iowa, next Friday and Saturday.

For Sunday, November 16

The Ecuador Partnership convenes in Quito this weekend for a weeklong meeting. Pray for God's guidance and blessing as representatives of Central Plains, Mennonite Churches of Ecuador (ICAME), Colombia Mennonite Church (IMCOL) and Mennonite Mission Network meet.

Next month, The Sower will be dated **November 19**.

Finance Update

Central Plains budget was down again slightly for the month of September. Income for the month was at \$42,174.49. Expenses for the month came in at \$44,142.11, creating a deficit of \$1,400.32 for the month. This result increases the overall deficit for the fiscal year to \$46,287.86. We are hoping

for a positive October to begin the reversal of this trend! We are thankful for your continued support of conference, where we see God at work in many different ways. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

October 23-29 Tim will be on vacation.

23-24 Shana will attend a meeting to plan for seminars at next summer's MC USA convention in Kansas City.

26 David will preach at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota.

27-30 Shana will attend Values-Based Leadership Program in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, as a presenter and cohort leader.

November 1 David attends a meeting with Hmong Mennonite Church leaders.

1-2 Tim will be in Julesburg, Colorado, for the installation of pastor Jack Norris at Julesburg Mennonite Church.

3 Tim attends Lombard Mennonite Peace Center board meeting.

9 David and Tim will be at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, South Dakota, for Nick Detweiler-Stoddard's ordination.

14-15 David, Shana, Tim, Ramiro and Monica will be at Conference Board and Committees meetings at Crooked Creek camp.

16-26 David will go to Ecuador Partnership meetings in Ecuador and Venezuela.

David Boshart nominated moderator-elect for MC USA

Executive Conference Minister David Boshart will be on the ballot for the position of moderator-elect at the Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly in Kansas City next July. If elected, his term would begin at Kansas City. He would serve two years as moderator-elect, followed by two years as moderator of Mennonite Church USA. This is a volunteer position which David would do alongside his roles in our conference. The Constituency Leaders Council gave widespread support to David's nomination at their October meeting.

Central Plains moderator Nathan Luitjens says, "As the Central Plains executive committee processed David's request for feedback, there were two things that stood out in our discernment. First, there was strong affirmation that Dave's gifts make him uniquely suited for the role of moderator of MC USA. Second, we were also unanimous that this was a gift that we as CPMC could offer to the broader Mennonite Church at this time."

[Here is the Mennonite Church USA news release.](#)

Delegates to MC USA Assembly in Kansas City

Every two years at the **Mennonite Church USA Convention**, the Delegate Assembly convenes to tend to the business of Mennonite Church USA. Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, June 30 - July 5, 2015, will be no different. Delegates—representatives from Mennonite congregations, area conferences, and Racial/Ethnic groups all across the country—play an important part in shaping the church. They discern goals for the next two years of denominational work, give feedback to the Executive Board and the Mennonite Church USA leaders, and discuss statements and resolutions that guide the overall work of the church. But what exactly does being a delegate entail? How do you become one? **Attached** you'll find answers to frequently asked questions about who can be a delegate, how they are chosen, and the work that they do.

MC USA is planning to do an early survey of delegates for Kansas City about the future of the Mennonite Church. Churches are asked to please identify their delegates as soon after January 1 as possible so they can participate in the survey.

Beth-El congregation leaves

Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford, Nebraska, has withdrawn its membership from Central Plains Mennonite Conference. The pastor and elders wrote a letter to conference leaders citing their frustration with "the continued dialogue concerning homosexuality" in the wider church. The ministry staff and Moderator Nathan Luitjens responded in writing expressing disappointment that they were not consulted prior to the decision and hope that the congregation might return in the future.

Time to send in your Shalom Readers info

Shalom Readers, a Central Plains Conference ministry, nurturing children in the way of peace.

Are you giving children in your congregation an opportunity to read books about the Jesus way of peace? We are happy for the response of some congregations in connecting us with the person in your congregation who is the Shalom Readers leader. Please send the name of the person in your congregations to the regional coordinators. For churches in CO, MT, NE or SD contact Joan Friesen (jfriesen@mainstaycomm.net) Box 682, Henderson, NE 68371. For churches in IA, IL, MN or WI contact Ellen Miller (ellenkmiller@gmail.com) 2131 Grand Blvd. Waterloo, IA 50701.

Dove's Nest conference November 7-9

Dove's Nest (www.DovesNest.net) is hosting its first national "Protecting our Children and Youth" Conference/Worship gathering in Omaha, NE, November 7-9. An exciting line up includes keynote speaker, Deondra Brown (more info [here](#)), and eight breakout sessions featuring speakers from across the country addressing a host of topics related to protecting children and youth in faith communities. There will be times of worship, reflection, networking, and a special evening banquet on Saturday. CEUs are offered for social workers, counselors, pastors, and others. Registration, which covers snacks and meals on Saturday, is only \$50, through October 24. A flyer with additional information is attached. More information, including online registration, is also available at this link: www.DovesNest.net/2014Conference. Please print and post the attached flyer.



Youth groups: Mark your calendars!

Youth Escape 2016 will be held **July 15-17, 2016**, at Hidden Acres Christian Center in central Iowa. The date has been moved to accommodate more people—the first weekend of August has too many schedule conflicts. The purpose of Youth Escape is to connect youth to Jesus, each other and the church. Youth Escape is the *one* event designed to bring youth together from our whole conference for fellowship, worship and recreation. Plan now to attend this fun and inspiring weekend!

WDC Resource Library

Pastors: Be not afraid. Lack of funds for resources? We have great new stuff, just waiting for your reserve. Here is a sample: *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor; *Belief Without Borders: inside the minds of Spiritual but not Religious* by Linda Mercadante; *We Make the Road by Walking: a year-long quest for spiritual formation, reorientation and activation* by Brian McLaren; *David and Goliath* by Malcolm Gladwell and *iGods: how technology shapes our spiritual and social lives* by Craig Detweiler. Do not delay, call or email today. 316-283-6300 / crlib@mennowdc.org Marlene Bogard, for Western District Resource Library.

Celebrate Missions in November!

Come with us and celebrate God's transforming love—in our own lives and the lives of Christians around the world! Choose a Sunday in November that fits your worship schedule and join Mennonite Mission Network in celebrating God's mission.

Feel free to download these worship materials to plan your own mission Sunday. The sermon starter, children's story, prayer, song and reading suggestions, Scripture passages, and bulletin inserts will make planning easy and hassle free. You can download these materials here:

<http://bit.ly/10msBnE>

If you have any questions, contact Brady Peters, Central Plains' church relations associate at Mennonite Mission Network: bradyp@mennonitemission.net.

Are you getting Equipping?

Stay up-to-date with all the happenings in Mennonite Church USA, plus receive news of new resources. [Subscribe to the Equipping newsletter here](#).

An opportunity to join the Corinthian Plan

The Corinthian Plan will have open enrollment this year beginning **November 15, 2014 through February 15, 2015**. The Corinthian Plan is the Mennonite Church USA sponsored health coverage plan. MC USA congregations currently not participating in The Corinthian Plan may join during this time by going through the application process. If a congregation joins between November 15 and December 31, 2014 coverage will start on January 1, 2015. If a congregation joins between January 1 and February 15, 2015, coverage will start the first day of the month following enrollment. Congregations can choose to apply for coverage during times of the year outside of open enrollment, but have to go through underwriting. For information on enrolling contact Denise Henke (Denise.Henke@everence.com) or Duncan Smith (duncans@mennoniteusa.org). Feel free to call (316-281-4255) or email Duncan Smith, TCP Director, with any comments or questions.

Training from the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute

“Restorative Justice 101: Training for Practice in Everyday Life” - Saturday November 22, 2014, 8:30am-4:30pm. Sponsored by the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute and held at Hamline University, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Early Tuition: \$125. Register online at www.rj101-3.eventbrite.com. Contact Donna Minter STAR.Mpls@gmail.com with questions.

Learning opportunities from AMBS

Anabaptist Short Course

“Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology” is a six-week online course, taught by Jamie Pitts, assistant professor of Anabaptist studies. The course is taught at a seminary level but for no credit. It is highly interactive, drawing on the wisdom among students. The course runs from Oct 22 to Dec 3. Learn more: <http://www.ambs.edu/anabaptistshortcourses>.

AMBS-Kansas Center

“Rural Ministry Seminar: The Mission of a Rural Congregation” will be presented by S. Roy Kaufman on January 24, 2015 from 8am to noon at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kansas. This seminar, which is open to the public, will explore the mission of a rural congregation and the unique calling that God has for the church in a rural context. For more information, please see www.ambs.edu/ruralministry. This seminar is open to the public and is especially designed for congregational lay leaders in a rural setting.

This seminar will be held in conjunction with an AMBS **seminary course** and a **webinar**, each led by S. Roy Kaufman. The seminary course is a one hour course available for credit or audit and will be held on January 20 and 22 from 6:30 – 9:30pm, and January 24 from 8:00 – 4:30 at Whitestone Mennonite Church. In addition to discussing the mission of a rural congregation, the course will also explore preaching and pastoral care in a rural setting, as well as the prophetic calling of rural ministry. This course is designed especially for pastors and for those who are hoping to pastor within a rural context.

The webinar will be held on May 6 from 1:00 – 2:30pm (Central Time) and is entitled “Where is the Good News for Rural Folk?” More information will be made available early next spring.

Pastors weeks at the Mennonite seminaries

Eastern Mennonite Seminary School for Leadership Training, January 19-21, 2015

A Church for All Generations in an Age of "Nones" What does it mean for the church when 46 million Americans identify themselves as "none of the above" when asked to choose religious affiliation? Come to School for Leadership Training to wrestle with how this growing group will change the face of churches and religion in the United States. Featured speakers are Lauren Winner and Dan Aleshire. See www.emu.edu/seminary/slt to learn more.

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary Pastors Week, January 26-29, 2015

"Where Culture Blurs Theology: What *is* an Anabaptist Christian?" is the theme for Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary Pastors Week. Speakers bring different points of view to how we honor all ethnic heritages that are part of the Mennonite Church. Greg Boyd, Drew Hart, Janet Plenert and Elizabeth Soto Albrecht explore what it means to be an Anabaptist today. Learn more at www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek.

Upcoming Events

Conference Board and Committees meet November 14-15 at Crooked Creek Christian Camp.

Sister Care Seminar will be held April 17 and 18, 2015 in southeast Iowa.

Annual Leader's Retreat will take place April 19-21, 2015, at St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, NE

Central Plains Annual Meeting will take place June 18-21, 2015, in the Twin Cities.

Mennonite Church USA Convention and Delegate Assembly will be held June 30 to July 5, 2015, in Kansas City.

Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered will take place July 21-26 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Youth Escape 2016 will take place July 15-17, 2016 in central Iowa.

The Sower is published the **third 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.