

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God. Ezekiel 11: 19-20

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

February 11, 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, February 16

Pray for the Pastoral Leadership Committee as they prepare to meet in Des Moines in two weeks.

For Sunday, February 23

Pray for the conference board meeting in the Twin Cities on Saturday. The agenda includes planning for Annual Meeting and forming the spending blueprint for next year.

For Sunday, March 2

Pray for Partner in Mission Philip Friesen as he serves and reaches out to international students and scholars at the University of Minnesota.

For Sunday, March 9

Next weekend, Tim and Carol Detweiler will lead a Marriage Enrichment retreat at Crooked Creek camp for several couples. Pray that marriages will be strengthened through the retreat.

Finance Update

The Conference had a strong month in January. Income rose to another good level at \$43,783.34. Comparing this to expenses at \$34,517.31, this created a positive surplus for the month of \$9,266.03. As a result, our previous surplus for the fiscal year is increased to \$14,464.58 as we enter a traditionally slow month of February. We are very thankful for your continued support of conference. Thank you. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

February 10-12 Tim attends Clergy Clinic at Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, Lombard, Illinois.

12-15 David attends Mennonite Church USA Executive Board in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

16 Tim preaches at Christ Community Church in Des Moines.

17 Tim attends Lombard Mennonite Peace Center board meeting in Lombard, Illinois.

19-23 Tim will be in Nebraska.

21-23 Shana attends Anabaptist Vision & Discipleship Series at Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas.

28-March 1 David and Monica attend conference board meeting in Omaha, Nebraska.

March 1 Tim meets with Pastoral Leadership Committee in Des Moines.

2 David preaches at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

2 Tim will be at Kalona Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Scott Swartzendruber's ordination.

7-9 David meets with conference ministers and Hmong leaders in Denver, Colorado.

Annual Leaders Retreat

April Yamasaki, lead pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite church in Abbotsford, British Columbia and author of "Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal" will be our retreat leader at our Annual Leaders Retreat planned for April 25-27, 2014, at the Saint Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska. The Annual Leaders Retreat is for pastors, chaplains and spouses serving in Central Plains Mennonite Conference. This is a great opportunity to renew and build friendships with each other; to experience renewal through inspiring worship and interactive group sessions; and to take time for relaxation, solitude, reading, taking a walk or just being still. Plan now to attend and watch for more information coming soon. —*Tim Detweiler*

New pastor chosen by Quito church

The Quito Mennonite Church voted to accept Luiz Tapia, their primary candidate, as their pastor.

The members of the Fellowship and Learning Tour were privileged to be present while he preached his second sermon, and he and his wife Jennifer accompanied us during our time in Quito. They are from Chile, but their desire has been to move to Quito since Jennifer spent most of her youth in Quito. We are excited for the church in Quito to have a fine young man who we feel will be very good at articulating the Anabaptist vision. Please pray for them as they transition with the church in Quito. —*Don Kempf, Ecuador Partnership*

Reading about peace with Shalom Readers

Are the children in your congregation reading books about peace this winter? It isn't too late to check out the information about [Shalom Readers](#) on the Central Plains website under Resources and find someone in your congregation to promote using the books in your congregation. Children can earn a free book. Contact Joan Friesen at jfriesen@mainstaycomm.net if you are from Colorado, Montana, Colorado or South Dakota. Contact Ellen Miller at ellenkmiller@gmail.com if you are from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota or Wisconsin. —*Ellen Miller, Shalom Readers*

Holy Land Tour with Dave and Shana

There is still time to register for the TourMagination tour to Isreal/Palestine we are hosting from April 24 – May 3. Our tour guide is Nelson Kraybill. For a tour description and information, [visit this Tourmagination web page](#). The cost will depend on airline ticket prices. For an itinerary and registration information, email David or Shana. —*David & Shana Boshart*

WDC Library

Lent and Easter Planning are underway in many congregations! A great resource to tap is the WDC Resource Library. Remember - anyone in Central Plains conference has access to this library of 12,000 items. See the new slide show at www.centralplainsmc.org/heres-whats-new. Take 2 minutes to view it and see what's available. Library Director Marlene Bogard will be calling all Central Plains churches during the month of February. Call or email visit Marlene to request resources. —*Marlene Bogard, WDC Library Director* / crlib@mennowdc.org / 316-283-6300

Transitional ministry training

Transitional ministry has a unique place in the mission of the church. While “interim pastors” have provided preaching and pastoral care for many years, “transitional ministry” involves training to lead congregations through a process of preparation for entering a new chapter of leadership.

March 10-14, 2014, Amigo Centre near Sturgis, Michigan, will host a Transitional Ministry Training retreat for individuals interested in pursuing this type of ministry.

Visit <http://tmt.amigocentre.org/> for additional information, or contact Amigo Centre at 269.651.2811.

Seminary preview days at AMBS

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary will host three Seminary Preview Days this spring for people wishing to explore study: February 21, March 14 and April 25. Meet faculty and students, sit in on classes and community gatherings, talk with admissions staff study programs, financial aid and the admission process. Register at www.ambs.edu/admissions/visit-ambs.cfm.

AMBS also welcomes visitors at any time if these dates are not convenient. Contact the admissions department to schedule a visit: admissions@ambs.edu or 800.964.2627.

AMBS Webinars

Jubilee for Today ♦ Thursday, March 6, 9:00-10:30 a.m. CST ♦ Presenter: Kim Tan
Early registration deadline March 2.

Dr. Tan, a highly successful biochemist and venture capitalist whose life was changed when he encountered John Howard Yoder’s teachings on Jubilee, will provide a short summary of his understanding of Jubilee and sabbatical principles, share his story of living out Jubilee principles as a young adult in intentional community with others, and talk about the implications of the “Jubilee Gospel” for his impressive business pursuits today. He will share how Jubilee principles guide his business ethics through socially responsible and environmentally sustainable development efforts around the world.

What is your Sermon Doing? Intending the Gospel in Preaching ♦ Thursday, March 20, 1:00-2:30 p.m. CDT ♦ Presenter: Allan Rudy-Froese
Early registration deadline March 16.

A common question asked of the preacher is, “What is your sermon about?” This webinar explores another important question for the preacher: “What is your sermon doing?” Sermons are more than educational – they do not simply convey information. At best, sermons do the gospel of Jesus Christ in a given time and place in a specific way. This webinar explores the range of what sermons can do, and will offer guidelines for preachers to consider as they ponder integrating what the sermon is about and what it is doing.

Register at www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Webinars.cfm.

West Coast MCC Bike Ride

Registration is open for Ride for Water for projects in Zambia - MCC Bike Ride in Panhandle of Idaho, August 3 - 8, 2014 on 225 miles of beautiful rails to trails including the Route of the Hiawatha with tunnels and trestles. More information at <http://westcoast.mcc.org/bikeidaho>.

—Beth Landis, Committee Chair, 208-340-8956

Upcoming Events

Marriage Enrichment Weekend with the Detweilers will take place March 14-16 at Crooked Creek Christian Camp.

Church Planters Gathering will take place April 11-12.

Annual Leaders Retreat for pastors and spouses will take place April 25-27 at Schuyler, Nebraska

Central Plains Annual Meeting will take place June 19-22 at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

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

The Sower is published the second Tuesday 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.