

The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. John 4.36

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

March 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, March 16

Pray for the Constituency Leaders Council meeting next weekend and for Executive Conference Minister David Boshart as he, along with members of the Executive Board Task Force, provides leadership to the discernment process there.

For Sunday, March 23

Pray for the Mennonite Camping Association meeting this week. Crooked Creek Christian Camp will host this annual gathering of Mennonite camp staffers which includes Swan Lake and Wilderness Wind camp staff.

For Sunday, March 30

The Ecuador Partnership invites you to pray for Mennonite brothers and sisters in Venezuela who are experiencing high inflation and insecurities about the safety of their families due to the political situation there.

For Sunday, April 6

Pray for the Outreach & Service Committee meeting next weekend in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The O&SC helps our churches with evangelism, church planting, peace and justice. Roger Farmer is the chair and David Boshart staffs the committee.

Finance Update

The conference retracted from the strong momentum gained in the previous couple of months. Income for March came in at \$18,774.13. Comparing this to expenses of \$35,549.51, this created a large deficit of \$16,775.38, which puts the conference back into a deficit for the fiscal year of \$2,070.05. We are very thankful for the continued support of Central Plains and continue to see God at work among us in many different ways. Thank you. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

March 20-22 David, Nathan Luitjens and Margie Caraballo attend Constituency Leaders Council in North Newton, Kansas.

23 Tim preaches at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

23 David preaches at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford, Nebraska.

25 Shana & David present workshops at Mennonite Camping Association gathering at Crooked Creek camp in Iowa.

27-29 Shana attends Eastern Mennonite University Board of Trustees meeting in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

April 6 Tim preaches at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Leaders Retreat: Sacred Pauses

As we live and serve in this fast-paced world full of distractions, What if we could take time out every day? Live a renewed life every day? Be refreshed by God every day? 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, April 25-27, 2014, at the Saint Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska. This year's theme focuses on Sacred Pausing.

The Annual Leaders Retreat is for pastors, chaplains and spouses serving in Central Plains Mennonite Conference. I invite you to come and reflect with April and your colleagues in ministry on how to live into a more centered way of living. Sacred pausing for renewal and spiritual vitality can become part of the rhythm in everyday life.

Brochures with registration information have been mailed. You can also find complete information *and register* on our website. Go to CPMC at Work → Events → [Annual Leaders Retreat](#). —*Tim Detweiler*

Youth Ministry Council

Are you a youth worker or pastor and feel like you are walking alone as you do youth ministry? Do you wonder about how to be relevant in this world of change? Do you want to share your hopes for youth convention? I am very pleased to invite you to Youth Ministry Council May 12-14 in Kansas City, Missouri. See a message from our denominational minister of youth and young adults, Rachel Springer Gerber, and find more information [at this web page](#). —*Shana Peachey Boshart*

Daily devotionals for Lent

Pastors and worship committees, please tell your congregation about the daily devotionals for Lent, *especially* if you are using the Leader worship materials. FREE Lenten family devotionals can be downloaded from the [Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre web site](#). Individuals may subscribe to daily devotionals at www.goshen.edu/devotions.

WDC Library

Brand New DVD's from the Western District Conference (WDC) Resource Library! All these and 500 more are yours for the asking!

The Bible's Buried Secrets, 112 minutes.

How the Bible Came to Be, 55 minutes.

Jerusalem: Center of the World, 120 minutes.

The Jewish People: a story of survival, 60 minutes.

From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians, 240 minutes.

God in America: how religious liberty shaped America. six hours.

The Amish: Shunned. 120 minutes.

All of these would be excellent for small group, Sunday School, mid-week or home viewing. Call or email to reserve! —*Marlene Bogard, WDC Library Director / crlib@mennowdc.org / 316-283-6300*

Shine: Living in God Light is coming soon!

Shine is a dynamic Sunday school curriculum for age three to grade eight that engages Christian communities in their life together. Allow it to inspire your group too! It will be released for use beginning Fall 2014 from MennoMedia.

Shine...

- calls children to experience the transforming power of God's love.
- nurtures trust in God and invites children to follow Jesus.
- encourages imaginative, interactive biblical storytelling.
- explores the meaning of the Bible within the gathered community.
- cultivates the inner life of the Spirit through spiritual practices.
- expresses faith through lives of compassionate peacemaking and service.
- invites all ages to shine God's light in the world.

Why choose Shine? This curriculum will include spiritual practices, a peacemaking emphasis, interesting, engaging activities, reflection and wondering times, and thoughtful Anabaptist theology. See more at: <http://shinecurriculum.com/about/what-is-shine/>.

Seminary preview days at AMBS

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary will host two more Seminary Preview Days this spring: March 14 and April 25. Because March 14 is Pi Day (3.14), visitors will be treated with pie at lunch and break-time!

Meet faculty and students, sit in on classes and community gatherings, talk with admissions staff study programs, financial aid and the admission process. Register for AMBS Preview Days at www.ambs.edu/admissions/visit-ambs.cfm. AMBS also welcomes visitors at any time. Contact the admissions department to schedule a visit: admissions@ambs.edu or 800.964.2627.

Remember, Central Plains Pastoral Leadership Committee has scholarships available for seminary study! Contact Susan Janzen at sejanzen@msn.com for information.

AMBS Webinars

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.

Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why? ♦

Wednesday, April 30, 1:00-2:30 p.m. CDT ♦ Presenter: Loren Johns
Early registration deadline April 24.

In the 16th century, Anabaptists approached Scripture in ways that were both similar to and different from their fellow Catholics and other Protestants. This webinar will seek to understand those similarities and differences in light of today. Which of those approaches might we repudiate today, or nuance, or embrace whole-heartedly? What historical and theological developments in the centuries since the 16th have influenced today's Mennonites more profoundly than did the Reformation? Along the way we will be learning what wisdom we can gain from both our Anabaptist forebears and from cross-cultural Bible study today.

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

Online Short Courses

AMBS is now offering "short courses" online for new Anabaptists and people seeking to deepen their ministry. Join a diverse community of learners in these brief and potent courses on Anabaptist history, thought and witness. Courses last six weeks each. Readings and discussion are comparable to seminary-level work, assuming critical thinking skills and some previous academic study. No credit will be awarded, but Continuing Education Units are available to those who complete course requirements. The next courses offered are:

Understanding and Managing Congregational Conflict, taught by David B. Miller from March 26-May 13, 2014 (with spring break April 7-12).

Mennonite Polity, taught by David Boshart and Janeen Bertsche Johnson from May 7-June 17, 2014.

[Read course descriptions and register for either course.](#)

Upcoming Events

Outreach & Service Committee meets April 11-12 in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

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.