

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

May 13, 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, May 18

Pray for Conference Minister Tim Detweiler and his wife Carol as Carol goes through cancer treatment.

For Sunday, May 25

Pray for Jewel Gingerich Longenecker as she prepares messages for Central Plains Annual Meeting on the theme, "Joyfully Following Jesus: Formed by God's Word."

For Sunday, June 1

Pray that God would provide for the pastoral leadership needs of the Hmong Mennonite Church of St. Paul.

For Sunday, June 8

Pray for the churches of southeast Iowa as they prepare to host Central Plains Annual Meeting June 19-22 in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Pray that God would prepare all participants so that God's will would be done at Annual Meeting.

Finance Update

Central Plains ends in the black—barely! Praise be to God and thanks to Central Plains conference congregations and individual supporters for our positive ending to the fiscal year! Income for the month of April came in at \$39,363.31. Expenses for the month came in at \$37,062.21, creating a surplus of \$2,201.10. As a result, we end the fiscal year with a small surplus of \$964.33. Again, we are very thankful for your continued support of conference, where we see God at work in many different ways. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

May 12-15 Shana attends Youth Ministry Council in Kansas City, Kansas.

13-14 Dave attends the Iowa Judicatory Retreat near Des Moines.
16-19 Shana attends the graduation retreat marking the end of the two-year training in spiritual direction from Christos Center.
19 Tim attends Lombard Mennonite Peace Center board meeting in Lombard, Illinois.
28-31 Shana is in Newton, Kansas, for training on the Shine curriculum.
June 7 Dave co-leads a study with the Hmong Mennonite Church of St. Paul.

It's time to register for Annual Meeting!

It's that time of year again! Find registration materials in your church office or on our web site, www.centralplainsmc.org. We meet this year in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, hosted by the southeast Iowa churches in Washington, Wayland, Mt. Pleasant, Donnellson and Pulaski.

Jewel Gingerich Longenecker will speak on the theme of being shaped by God's word. Delegate sessions will include an introduction to our new study on communal biblical discernment. Register before rates go up on June 1!

Call Shana for your *Shine* training

Shana Peachey Boshart and others will be available to train your Sunday School teachers in the use of the *Shine* curriculum. Call her to arrange your training: 319-936-5905.

Shine nurtures trust in God and invites children to follow Jesus. It encourages imaginative, interactive biblical storytelling and cultivates the inner life of the Spirit through spiritual practices. See more at: <http://shinecurriculum.com/about/what-is-shine/>.

WDC Resource Library

Going Missional? Leaders, pastors, make us your first stop for Missional Materials! We have 217 books and DVD's on the topic, including many by the standard gurus of missional thinking and theology: Alan Hirsch, Lois Barrett, Stuart Murray. Also an excellent, up-to-date collection of resources on the Emergent Church. Search for yourself at mennowdc.org/library. Don't delay - call us today! —Marlene Bogard, Library Director, 316-283-6300 or crlib@mennowdc.org.

Shalom Readers for Summer

Shalom Readers makes a great summer reading program! It can also dovetail nicely with your Bible School or Kids Clubs. Find all you need on the [Shalom Readers page](http://www.centralplainsmc.org) at www.centralplainsmc.org!

Year of the Bible Network

Discover over a dozen links to help you understand how children learn, how to tell Bible stories, and how to choose a curriculum through a Mennonite lens: www.yearofthebiblenetwork.org/children2.html.



Upcoming Events

IBA Graduation for Templo Alabanza students will take place Sunday, June 8, in Moline, Illinois.
Central Plains Annual Meeting will take place June 19-22, 2014, at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.
Youth Escape 2014 will take place the weekend of August 1-3, 2014, in central Iowa.
Conference Board meets August 22-23, 2014, in Freeman, South Dakota.
Conference Board and Committees meet at Crooked Creek Christian Camp November 14-15, 2014.

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.