

*If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. — I John 1:7*

# The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

January 21, 2015

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, Mennonite Women.

**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, January 25**

Today Nathan Ramer is being ordained for ministry at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church. Pray for God's guidance and blessing for Nathan and the Wellman congregation as they seek God's will together.

**For Sunday, February 1**

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board met this weekend in Kansas City to make plans for next summer's convention and delegate assembly. Pray that God would grant wisdom and guidance to the MC USA board and staff as they plan this important event.

**For Sunday, February 8**

The Central Plains Annual Meeting Task Group met recently to make plans for our conference annual meeting June 18-21 in St. Paul. Pray for the task group and for the local host committee as they make plans for a weekend of fellowship and discernment.

**For Sunday, February 15**

Next Sunday, Aaron Carlson will be ordained at Manson (Iowa) Mennonite Church. Pray for God's guidance and blessing for Aaron and the congregation as they embody and proclaim the reign of God in Manson.

Next month, The Sower will be dated **February 18**.

**Finance Update**

Thanks be to God for this uplifting news regarding the budget. We have seen a deficit each of the last four months, but that changed in December year-end donations. Income for the month soared to \$78,472.89. Expenses for the month came in at \$35,426.77. With this monthly surplus of \$43,046.12, our overall deficit has been significantly lowered to \$12,891.88. We still have a ways to go, but we are very thankful for all the support we have seen not only last month but throughout the

year. We continue to ask that you prayerfully consider your support during this time. —*Stewardship Task Group*

## Staff News

**January** 19-21 Tim will be attending Pastor's Week at EMS in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

19-22 David and Shana meet with pastors in South Dakota & Minnesota then attend Annual Meeting Task Group in St. Paul.

25 David will preach at Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

25 Tim will officiate and Shana will attend the ordination of Nathan Ramer at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

26-29 David and Tim attend Pastors Week at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

29-31 David attends Mennonite Church USA Executive Board in Kansas City.

31 Tim will be at the conflict mediation workshop offered by the Conflict Management Support Team in the Twin Cities.

**February** 15 David attends Shalom Mennonite Church partnership meeting in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and then attends worship at the Hmong Mennonite Church in St. Paul.

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

## Conflict Mediation workshop to be offered in Minneapolis

A workshop on **Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches** is planned for January 31, 2015 at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. in Minneapolis, Minnesota, sponsored by the Conflict Management Support Team of Central Plains Conference. The workshop begins at 9am and ends at 4:30pm. Topics addressed will be:

- The Nature and Role of Conflict
- Conflict in the New Testament: Finding Renewal in Conflict
- Self-Assessment Exercise: Understanding and improving your own style of response to conflict
- Interpersonal Peacemaking Skills: How to be effective when people are angry
- Congregational Conflict: Understanding conflict in groups and how to manage it

Cost is \$49 per person. A fee for lunch will be charged at the event. This workshop is open to pastors, elders/deacons, congregational chairpersons, and all interested persons who want to learn more about using conflict transformation skills for managing conflict in the congregation. You can register on line at [www.centralplainsmc.org](http://www.centralplainsmc.org).

## You can help young Congolese Mennonites attend world conference

To honor our historic connections to the Mennonite Church in Congo, the Outreach and Service Committee has been working for the last two years to identify and sponsor several Congolese college students to attend the Global Youth Summit and the Mennonite World Conference Assembly next summer in Harrisburg, PA. This would make an excellent offering project for families or children/adult Sunday School classes. If you are interested in helping with this sponsorship, please send your contributions to Central Plains Mennonite Conference, designated for the Congolese Student Sponsorship. More information will be coming about the students we will be sponsoring. —*David Boshart, Conference Minister for Outreach & Service*

## STAR Training for Central Plains

To maximize the potential for CPMC's members to participate in the [Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience – the STAR Training](#), the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute ([www.mnpeace.org](http://www.mnpeace.org)) based in Minneapolis, has deliberately scheduled their June STAR Training on the 4 & 1/2 days immediately preceding the Central Plains Annual Meeting in the Twin Cities. This STAR Training will be held Saturday-Wednesday June 13-17, 2015. Group discounts are available and Twin Cities Mennonites/Anabaptists are offering free/low-cost lodging for Central Plains STAR trainees who attend this STAR Training. Sunday worship is at 5pm after the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of STAR at the [Mennonite Worker](#) and [Third Way](#) congregations. [Register here](#).

## Nebraska Women's Retreat

The Nebraska Women's Retreat will be held on March 7-8, at The Leadership Center in Aurora, NE. The speaker for the weekend will be Stacey Waltner, Freeman, South Dakota. Her theme will be "Body, Soul and Sanity." Registration forms were distributed to Nebraska churches. If you are interested in participating in this event or have any questions you can contact Elizabeth Troyer-Miller at [melizabethm24@gmail.com](mailto:melizabethm24@gmail.com). Come and enjoy a weekend of relaxation and rejuvenation with your sisters in Christ!

## Devotionals for Children

**Upside Down, Inside Out**, the Mennonite Church Canada Year B Lent At-Home booklet, 2015 [is now available as a free download](#). This fully illustrated devotional will appeal to families with children ages 3 - 12 and includes scripture, prayer, activities, songs, and much more. Created by Elsie Rempel, this booklet is perfect for at-home, but also could be used for Sunday morning worship (children's time) or for a special Lent emphasis for children on Wednesday nights.

## WDC Library News

### Lent and Easter resources abound!

Lent begins February 18, 2015 with Ash Wednesday and runs until Easter, which falls on April 5 this year. These weeks allow for in-depth study on the life of Christ, trying out a new spiritual practice and planning meaningful worship. The WDC Resource library can help! We have adult studies, resources for hands-on at-home Lent activities and lots of worship planning materials. Search our catalog at [mennowdc.org](http://mennowdc.org), email us at [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org) or give us a call: [316-283-6300](tel:316-283-6300). Serving you is our pleasure!

### Library director resigns

Marlene Bogard, director of the Western District Conference Library, is leaving her role with WDC. She writes, "I have loved my job for almost 25 years, but it is time for a transition. I have accepted the position of Executive Director of Mennonite Women USA and have resigned my position at WDC effective Feb. 28. This new job will enable Mike and I to move to Oregon to be closer to our sons, grandson and daughter-in-law, which has been a dream for several years."

Marlene and I have had a wonderful working relationship and I will miss her. Western District Conference will hire a new library director, and we expect to continue to partner with the WDC Library to offer their resources to members and leaders in Central Plains conference. —*Shana Peachey Boshart, Conference Minister for Christian Formation*

## Church Conflict Transformation Resources

Ted Lewis is providing a variety of services to help churches engage interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. Prevention work includes the Hagar Workshop to help people heal from past relational hurts. A variety of presentations can also be done on restorative justice and on building a restorative culture within a church community. Consultations for conflict intervention work is also provided. Ted currently lives in Duluth, Minnesota. Contact Ted at [tedlewis76@gmail.com](mailto:tedlewis76@gmail.com) or 715-205-5945. Find more details at [www.restorativetrainer.com](http://www.restorativetrainer.com).

## Learning opportunities from AMBS

### Spring online course

An online course, "History of Christianity in Africa," will be offered by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary from February 3 to May 20. It examines the history, missionary dynamics and

current changing demographics of the African church. The instructor is James Krabill, PhD, Mennonite mission worker in Ivory Coast for almost two decades and senior executive for global ministries with Mennonite Mission Network since 1996. Anyone not enrolled in a theological program who is taking a first AMBS online course gets a 50 percent tuition discount. To learn more and to register: [www.ambs.edu/christianityinafrica](http://www.ambs.edu/christianityinafrica).

**Lent worship planning webinar:** Thursday, Feb. 5, 6:30-7:45 pm CST, led by Rachel Miller Jacobs. Explore resources for Lent worship, including scripture presentations, sermon ideas, children's worship ideas, hymns and visuals.

### Anabaptist Short Courses

Anabaptist short courses are six-week online courses taught at a seminary level but for no credit. Learn more and register at <http://www.ambs.edu/anabaptistshortcourses>.

*"Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?"* will be taught by Loren Johns from February 11 through March 25. Discover how early Anabaptists engaged scripture and which approaches we might embrace, nuance or repudiate today.

*"Engaging John Howard Yoder's Theology Today"* will be taught by Gayle Gerber Koontz from April 8 through May 20. Early registration deadline is March 25. Evaluate some of Yoder's writings on the nature and mission of the church, and on nonviolence. Attention will be given to the intersection of Yoder's life and thought, including sexuality.

### Upcoming Events

**Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches workshop** will be held January 31 at Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis.

**Nebraska Women's Retreat** will be held March 7 and 8 at the Leadership Center in Aurora, Nebraska.

**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, Nebraska.

**Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience - The STAR Training** will take place June 13-17, 2015 in Minneapolis.

**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](http://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.