

*Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you. — Hosea 10:12*

# The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

March 18, 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, March 22**

Pray for Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meeting in North Newton, Kansas, this Thursday through Saturday. CLC is the group of conference leaders that gives counsel to the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. Our Central Plains moderators and executive conference minister attend CLC.

**For Sunday, March 29 Palm Sunday**

Pray for MC USA Executive Board meeting in Kansas City next Monday through Wednesday to prepare for the July delegate assembly.

**For Sunday, April 5 Easter Sunday**

On Saturday, April 11, congregational leaders from Central Plains churches will gather in Des Moines to consider the adoption of a covenant for tending to our relationships as a conference. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will be powerfully present to guide our discernment.

**For Sunday, April 12**

Next Friday and Saturday, a Sister Care seminar is taking place in eastern Iowa and the church planters of Central Plains will have their annual gathering for training and support. Pray that God's will be done in both of these events.

Next month, The Sower will be dated **April 15**.

## Finance Update

Central Plains budget fell back a bit in February following two very strong months in December and January. Income for the month was at \$21,174.18. Expenses for the month came in at \$39,193.07, generating a deficit of \$18,018.89 for the month. This result puts the budget back into the red for the year at a loss of \$16,916.97. We are thankful for the support! —*Stewardship Task Group*

## Staff News

March 19-21 Shana attends EMU Trustees meeting in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

25-28 David, Nathan and Margie go to Constituency Leaders Council in North Newton, Kansas.

29-April 4 Palm Sunday and Holy Week

April 5 Easter Sunday

6-8 David attends MC USA Executive Board meetings in Kansas City.

8-10 Shana attends Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Training in Baltimore.

11 All staff attends the conference teaching day for the covenant.

12 Tim preaches at Templo Alabanza in Moline, Illinois.

## April 11 summit on a covenant for Central Plains

**All delegates, pastors, elders, deacons, council chairs and other interested people are invited to gather in Des Moines on Saturday, April 11, to consider the adoption of a covenant** for tending to our relationships as a conference. By covenanting together to six specific Christian practices and to a process of discernment around disagreements, we hope to invigorate our discipleship, fellowship and witness as a conference. A letter of invitation to the summit and the latest version of the covenant have been emailed to pastors and churches. They can also be found on the Covenant Summit page of our web site.

This page will be the place to register and to find all pertinent information to help you prepare for the meeting.

## Updates on Max Villatoro

Stay up-to-date with our efforts to obtain a stay of deportation for Max Villatoro on the Central Plains web site: <http://www.centralplainsmc.org/max-villatoro>. Please pray for Max's release and for the well being of Max and Gloria and their children.

## Webinar for Adult Bible Study teachers

Shana Peachey Boshart will host a training webinar for leaders of adult Bible studies and teachers of adult Sunday School on **Monday, March 30, at 7:30pm CDT**. See more information and register at <http://www.centralplainsmc.org/teacher-webinar.html>. Please pass this information on to adult Sunday School teachers and Bible study leaders.

## Annual Meeting

Plan now to come to the Twin Cities June 18-22 for Central Plains Annual Meeting 2015. Local hosts are making plans for a great gathering. Greg Boyd, lead pastor at Woodland Hills and a prolific author, will speak on the theme *Joyfully Following Jesus, Communities Centered in Christ*. Other special features of this year's event include worship and communion with the Woodland Hills congregation on Sunday morning and learning tours to various ministries in the Twin Cities on Friday afternoon.

Detailed information and registration forms will be mailed to churches in early April. Watch the [Annual Meeting web page](#) for information.

## Youth Delegates

It is time for congregations to be identifying their youth delegates for our 2015 Annual Meeting. Each congregation may choose one "active participant of their congregation between the ages of 15 and 20" to represent the congregation as a youth delegate. Shana and others will host youth delegates, providing activities to help them get to know one another and orient them to their tasks as

delegates. A brand new Youth Delegate Fact Sheet is attached and is also available on the Annual Meeting web page.

## Sister Care

A Sister Care seminar will be offered April 17-18, 2015, at Kalona Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa. Sister Care seminars provide women with tools for ongoing personal healing, for recognizing and celebrating God's grace in their lives, and to responding more confidently and effectively to the needs of others. Topics include "Claiming my identity as God's Beloved," "Caring for Self and Others," "Compassionate Listening," and "Transforming Loss and Grief."

Presenters Rhoda Keener and Carolyn Heggen have worked extensively in healing ministries in the church and in the mental health field. Sister Care seminars are a ministry of Mennonite Women USA. Registration information has been sent to eastern Iowa congregations. **Those from a distance are welcome as well.** Contact Lauralee Kauffman at [NKauff224@yahoo.com](mailto:NKauff224@yahoo.com) or 319-321-5618 with questions.

## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Dove's Nest is pleased to offer free resources for your use throughout the month. We encourage pastors and church leaders to take this opportunity to highlight the important role of faith communities in keeping children and youth safe.

The resources include:

- a series of bulletin inserts, including sample prayers, responsive readings, information about child and youth protection policies, and general information about the faith community's role in protecting children and youth
- a children's story for use during worship or Sunday school.
- a PowerPoint file designed for use on your congregation's projection system prior to the morning service, or whenever you deem best
- a list of helpful Internet resources related to child and youth protection

**To access these FREE resources, visit [www.DovesNest.net/CAPMonth](http://www.DovesNest.net/CAPMonth).**

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Jon Stanton, Executive Director, at [Jon@DovesNest.net](mailto:Jon@DovesNest.net).

## Summer VBS: Hearing God's Call

Samuel heard it during the middle of the night. Mary heard it through an angel. The disciples were hard at work when they heard it. They all heard God's special message just for them! *Message Received: Hearing God's Call* lets children know that God continues to call all kinds of people—including them! People are called to love God and follow Jesus every day. Those who hear God's message and respond are forever changed.

Your children will study a different Bible story each day. Order this VBS curriculum at <http://www.faithandliferesources.org/Curriculum/vbs/>.

## WDC Library News

As you explore conflict resolution, discernment, Bible study, and any other topics of interest, check our website for books to consider at the [WDC Conference Library](#).

Click on the "List" tab to find topical starter lists of interesting sources or perform your own search of interest.

Featured Book: *Discerning God's Will Together* by Morris and Olsen (updated version, 2012) provides a "step-by-step approach that can be used to help any size group learn a new way to make decisions—a way that is interactive, spiritual, and rooted in faith practices and community."

Let us know what you need by calling 316-283-6300 or e-mailing [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org). Remember—we are here to serve you, dear friends in Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

## New Blog on Bible and Conflict Themes

Included in Ted Lewis' church-oriented website on restorative justice and conflict resolution is a new blog that integrates biblical narratives and conflict transformation themes. This content can easily be adapted for sermon illustrations and class presentations when application areas have to do with matters of communication styles, forgiveness, peacemaking, and third-party intervention. To get monthly posting announcements by email, sign up in the box on the homepage at [www.restorativetrainer.com](http://www.restorativetrainer.com).

## STAR Training special for Central Plains

Get your STAR Training and stay for Central Plains Annual Meeting too! The Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute ([www.mnpeace.org](http://www.mnpeace.org)) has deliberately scheduled their June STAR ([Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience](#)) 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 or 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](#).

## Learning opportunities from AMBS

### Webinars

*Funeral Planning: An Anabaptist Approach* will be presented by Janice Yordy Sutter, Pastor of Worship and Preaching, Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Indiana, on **Wednesday, April 22**, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. CDT.

[Find descriptions of each webinar and registration information here.](#)

### Anabaptist Short Course

*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.

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>.

## Upcoming Events

**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.