

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations. — Isaiah 61:11

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

April 15, 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, April 19

Pray for the annual retreat of Central Plains pastors, chaplains and their spouses at Schuyler, Nebraska, today through Tuesday. Pray also for the Pastoral Leadership Committee meeting today.

For Sunday, April 26

Pray for the Central Plains Christian Formation Committee meeting next Saturday. The CFC equips formation leaders through such activities as teacher training, Shalom Readers, and web resources.

For Sunday, May 3

This morning, Rachelle Luitjens will be licensed toward ordination at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa. Husband Nathan is the full-time pastor, and Rachelle will be installed as half-time pastor of mission and faith formation. Pray for Rachelle, Nathan and the congregation as they adjust to new patterns of ministry together.

For Sunday, May 10

Pray for Central Plains conference ministers Tim Detweiler, David Boshart and Shana Peachey Boshart in these busy weeks leading up to Central Plains Annual Meeting and Mennonite Church USA Convention.

For Sunday, May 17

Central Plains Annual Meeting 2015 will take place June 18-21, hosted by the Twin Cities churches. Pray for the many volunteers from host churches and the conference staff as they prepare.

Next month, The Sower will be dated **May 20**. Send submissions to Shana by May 5.

Finance Update

Central Plains budget fell backwards for the second straight month in March. Income for the month was at \$27,687.78. Expenses for the month came in at \$34,521.51, making a deficit of \$6,833.73 for the month. This result increases the overall deficit at a loss of \$23,750.70 with only

two weeks to go before our fiscal year end on April 30. We invite you to consider giving in April so we can erase this deficit and end the year in the black! Thank you. —*Stewardship Task Group*

As our fiscal year end approaches, contributions are needed

Our Central Plains fiscal year ends April 30, and we are anticipating a possible shortfall of \$28,000. Has your congregation made your full contribution to Central Plains for this year? Every congregation receives services from conference regardless of its level of financial support. We challenge every congregation to give to Central Plains, even if only a small amount. Can we achieve 100% participation in contributing to our budget? Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Staff News

April 17-18 Shana attends Sister Care in Kalona, Iowa.

19-21 David and Tim attend Annual Leaders Retreat in Schuyler, Nebraska.

19-22 Shana attends Youth Ministry Council in Canadensis, Pennsylvania.

29-May 1 David attends MC USA & MC Canada Joint Executive Committee in Elkhart, Indiana.

2 Shana attends Christian Formation Committee meeting in Manson, Iowa.

3 David attends Shalom Partnership meeting in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

3 Tim installs and licenses Rachelle Luitjens at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

14-18 David and Shana speak at Virginia Mennonite Conference pastor gathering.

18 Tim attends Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Board meeting in Lombard, Illinois.

Annual Meeting

It's time to register!

Registration is open for Central Plains Annual Meeting 2015 June 18-22 in the Twin Cities. 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 have been mailed to churches. The same information is available on the [Annual Meeting web page](#).

Appoint your 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.

Town Hall meeting for delegates to Kansas City convention

On Tuesday, May 12, Mennonite Church USA Executive Director Ervin Stutzman and MC USA Executive Board Member David Boshart will meet via teleconference with delegates to the 2015 Mennonite Church USA Convention in Kansas City. Ervin and Dave will provide a guide to delegate responsibilities, share how the delegate survey helped shape delegate agenda, distribute and review the agenda, provide handouts for use in congregational study groups and invite feedback and discussion. Register by Friday, May 8, at www.centralplainsmc.org/delegate-teleconference. All delegates to Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly are encouraged to participate.

Max Villatoro

Max Villatoro, pastor of Iglesia Menonita Torre Fuerte in Iowa City, was deported on Friday, March 20. He is staying with his sister in Honduras for the time being. David Boshart visited him there March 31 through April 2. We'll continue to post updates at www.centralplainsmc.org/max-villatoro. We invite you to donate to a fund to assist the Villatoros with legal fees and living expenses. You may send donations to the conference office at P.O. Box 101, Freeman, SD 57029 or donate online at www.centralplainsmc.org/donate. Please pray for wisdom, guidance and well-being for Max and Gloria and their children, Anthony, Edna, Angela and Aileen.

Those who are interested in further advocacy for a more just immigration system may want to follow the MCC Washington Office at mcc.org/get-involved/advocacy or America's Voice at americasvoice.org/blog. These two organizations supported our advocacy for Max and they continue to engage this agenda on behalf of many others like him.

Learn, Grow, Serve, Repeat: Anabaptist Faith Formation Launch

An Anabaptist Faith Formation Launch will be held June 12-13, 2015 on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kansas. This event will kick off a focus on faith formation for Anabaptist congregations and launch a new web site, www.anabaptistfaithformation.org. The web site is a joint project of Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Western District Conference and Mennonite Church USA. Andy Brubacher Kaethler and Rachel Miller Jacobs will be featured speakers.

Shana Peachey Boshart and Rachel Springer Gerber will conclude the event with a presentation of the Anabaptist Faith Formation website. There will also be 14 different breakout sessions. The purpose of the launch is to provide practical, meaningful ways for congregations to build on the good faith formation that is already taking place. Western District Conference is hosting the launch and invites Central Plains folks to attend. Register and find more details at www.mennowdc.org.

Dove's Nest seeks new executive director

Jonathan Stanton, executive director of Dove's Nest, is stepping down from the executive director role. His expertise and passion for Dove's Nest's mission has been greatly valued, and we will miss him dearly. Please pray for Dove's Nest as **we seek our next executive director**. Perhaps you sense God's calling to assist Dove's Nest in keeping children and youth safe in faith communities. Or perhaps you know of someone who would be a wonderful fit for this opening. [The full-time position description and application are available online.](#)

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

Feeling the stress of doing too many good things? This new WDC Library book, *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton may be just what you need. As a victim of "Christian Fatigue Syndrome," Barton felt an emptiness even though she wanted to claim the abundant life that Jesus promised in John 10:10. This book shares her spiritual transformation as she practiced spiritual disciplines that spoke to her specific needs, including solitude, self-examination and discernment.

Another encouraging title on this topic is *Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal* by Mennonite minister April Yamasaki.

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

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) 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 2nd day of STAR at the [Mennonite Worker](#) and [Third Way](#) congregations. [Register here](#).

Learning opportunities from AMBS

Webinar

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 a complete description and registration information here](#).

Upcoming Events

Sister Care Seminar will be held April 17 and 18, 2015 in southeast Iowa.

Pastoral Leadership Committee meets in Schuyler, Nebraska, April 19.

Annual Leader's Retreat will take place April 19-21, 2015, at St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska.

Christian Formation Committee meets Saturday, May 2, in Manson, Iowa.

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. Click on Publications.



Editor: Shana Peachey Boshart: shanaboshart@centralplainsmc.org

Spanish translation by Steven Rhodes: 319-930-7303

To subscribe or unsubscribe, email office@centralplainsmc.org.

Office: P.O. Box 101, Freeman, SD 57029

Monica Clem, Office Manager: 605-925-4463; office@centralplainsmc.org

Conference Ministers: P.O. Box 352, Kalona, IA 52247

David Boshart: davidboshart@centralplainsmc.org; 319-936-5904

Tim Detweiler: timdetweiler@centralplainsmc.org; 319-458-0224

Shana Boshart: shanaboshart@centralplainsmc.org; 319-936-5905

Hispanic Ministries Coordinator: Ramiro Hernandez rmherns@yahoo.com 319-621-3725

Moderator Nathan Luitjens: moderator@centralplainsmc.org 319- 256-6061

Asst. Moderator Margie Mejia Caraballo: assitantmoderator@centralplainsmc.org 309-235-3011

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.