

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. — John 12:24

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

May 20, 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, May 24

Pray for Monica Clem, office manager for Central Plains, as she oversees registration, prepares delegate packets, and arranges many other details in preparation for Annual Meeting 2015 in St. Paul.

For Sunday, May 31

Today, Joe Walks Along, Jr., will be installed as pastor at Lame Deer Mennonite Church in Lame Deer, Montana. Pray for God's vision to be realized in Joe's ministry in Lame Deer.

For Sunday, June 7

Pray for the Villatoro family, separated by deportation. Pray for God's guidance and provision for Max and Gloria and their children in this time of separation and uncertainty. Pray also for Iglesia Torre Fuerte, the congregation in Iowa City that Max and Gloria pastor.

For Sunday, June 14

Pray for all who will participate in Central Plains Annual Meeting 2015 in St. Paul: the local hosting churches, conference leaders, congregational delegates, broader church representatives and our speaker, Greg Boyd.

Next month, *The Sower* will be dated **June 17**. Send submissions to Shana by June 2.

Finance Update

We come in celebration! The Central Plains budget ended the fiscal year in the black once again. Thanks be to God! Thanks to all of you, congregations and individuals! Special thanks to a very gracious anonymous donor who spearheaded a matching fundraiser which helped spark *another* donor to increase the match, providing momentum for other individuals and congregations close the gap between our income and expenses. As a result of the fundraiser, income for the month of April came in at \$62,086.12. Expenses for April came in at \$34,787.33, providing a monthly surplus of \$27,298.79. This result erases the previous deficit and concludes the fiscal year with an overall

surplus of \$3,548.09. We are so thankful for your support and are excited to begin a new fiscal year in Central Plains Mennonite Conference. —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

May 30 Shana preaches at Wood River Mennonite Church, Wood River, Nebraska.

30-31 David will be in Montana to install Joe Walks Along Jr. as pastor at Lame Deer Mennonite Church.

June 5 David will be in St. Paul to meet with Thirdway leadership team.

7 David will preach at Iglesia Menonita Torre Fuerte in Iowa City.

12-13 Shana will be in Newton, Kansas, to present at the Anabaptist Faith Formation Launch.

14 David will preach at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Nebraska.

Annual Meeting

Please register soon!

Please register as soon as possible for Central Plains Annual Meeting 2015 June 18-22 in the Twin Cities. Early registration allows us to give accurate counts to the caterers, reducing waste, saving costs and allowing us to be good stewards. We do not set a registration deadline, but everything works more smoothly if you register by **June 10**.

Detailed information and registration forms have been mailed to churches. The same information is available on the [Annual Meeting web page](#).

About youth delegates

Remember, when you invite a youth between the ages of 15 and 20 to represent your church as a youth delegate, give them the brand new [Youth Delegate Fact Sheet](#), which you'll find on the [Annual Meeting web page](#). The Fairfield Inn in Vadnais Heights has been designated as the youth hotel, if youth want to stay where other youth are staying. (No formal youth activities will be held there.) Call Shana if you have questions.

Missional Discipleship Initiative: Informational meeting on June 18

How can we introduce more people to new life in Jesus? How can we help our members deepen their discipleship with Jesus? And how might we do **both at the same time**? With the Missional Discipleship Initiative! Check out this short [brochure about the MDI](#). Or, go to the [Missional Discipleship Initiative page](#) of our web site to learn the details.

You are invited to a meeting to learn all about how the MDI works and how we plan to support participating congregations! Come to Annual Meeting a few hours early to hear from Marvin Lorenzana of Mennonite Mission Network. He will meet with interested pastors and lay leaders on **Thursday afternoon, June 18, at Woodland Hills Church** to share what it would mean to join a cohort of Central Plains congregations to participate in the Missional Discipleship Initiative. Please RSVP for this meeting by filling out the form on the web page.

Friends of Pastor Max advocacy group

A group of folks in southeast Iowa has formed an advocacy group called "Friends of Pastor Max" born out of the support of our faith community and beyond for Pastor Max Villatoro. A Facebook page has been started; [find it here](#). As we clarify our purpose, we will put additional information here as well as determine other methods of communication and invite you to participate in advocacy actions. Please "like" us on Facebook and share with your friends. You may also check "get notifications" to see any updates on the newsfeed. —*Edie Nebel, Friends of Pastor Max Chair*

Other ways to help the Villatoros

Visit www.centralplainsmc.org/max-villatoro for instructions on how to call the Department of Homeland Security to advocate for Max. Also consider donating 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 the well-being of Max, Gloria, Anthony, Edna, Angela and Aileen.

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

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. AMBS professors Andy Brubacher Kaethler and Rachel Miller Jacobs will be featured speakers. The web site is a joint project of Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Western District Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

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 promote faith formation in people of all ages. Western District Conference is hosting the launch and invites Central Plains folks to attend. Register and find more details at www.mennowdc.org.

Shalom Readers anniversary

At Annual Meeting we'll celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Shalom Readers! This very simple but effective reading program has been quietly shaping Central Plains children in Jesus' way of peace. In 1990, the Northern District Peace and Social Concerns Committee introduced the Shalom Readers Club, based on an idea by David Hiebert from Allegheny Conference.

If you were involved in the start of Shalom Readers or know the people who were, please contact Ellen Miller at ellenkmiller@gmail.com or (319) 235-9130. We look forward to celebrating this milestone!

Michele Hershberger to speak at Youth Escape 2016!

Youth and sponsors, mark your calendars for July 16-17, 2016, when Central Plains youth will gather for our every-two-years youth retreat! Michele is a dynamic speaker who communicates with passion a love for the Bible and the Big Story of salvation history. You won't want to miss this!

Central Plains Formation Resource Library

Shana Peachey Boshart keeps a library of formation resources at the ministry staff offices in Kalona. Recent additions to the library include:

Reconcile by John Paul Lederach- great for an adult Sunday School class or small group

Sister Care DVD and study guide – any women's group would enjoy this

Ordinary Miracles by Rachel Springer Gerber – a group of young parents would enjoy this

Kids Can Know the Way, Kids Can Celebrate, Kids Can Catch the Love, and Kids Can Speak Up – designed for mid-week children's ministry or any other ministry with children.

Contact Shana to check out these books: 319-936-5905 or shanaboshart@centralplainsmc.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.](#)

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.

Upcoming Events

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: assistantmoderator@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.