

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves. —Psalm 126:5-6

The Sower

a newsletter for Central Plains Mennonite Conference leaders and pastors

September 16, 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, September 20

Today marks exactly six months since Pastor Max Villatoro was deported to Honduras. Pray this week for God to make a way for Max to return to his family. "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

For Sunday, September 27

This weekend the Central Plains Christian Formation Committee is meeting for a planning retreat. Pray for God's guidance and wisdom as they consider how best to provide faith formation resources for our congregations. Today David Nickel is installed as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Lincoln. Pray for David and the congregation as they begin their ministry together.

For Sunday, October 4

Today Joel Beachy will be installed and licensed towards ordination at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa. Pray for Joel and the congregation as they begin their ministry together.

For Sunday, October 11

Today, Chris and Kimberly Becker will be installed as pastors at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Pray for the Beckers and for Emmanuel Mennonite as they begin their ministry together.

For Sunday, October 18

Today is the first of several days of meetings for the Mennonite Church USA Constituency Leaders Council. Pray for God's guidance as these representatives of the 21 area conferences meet, and pray for wisdom for David Boshart as he facilitates the meetings.

Next month, The Sower will be dated **October 21**. Send submissions to Shana by **October 5**.

Finance Update

Central Plains budget continued its summer spiral into the red in the month of August. Income for the month was higher in August than July, at \$31,723.88. Expenses for the month were lower in August than July, at \$38,996.90. As a result of another monthly deficit, we extend our fiscal year deficit to \$40,510.09. We are very grateful for your contributions and support and invite you to consider helping us reverse this trend in September and October! —*Stewardship Task Group*

Staff News

David Boshart is on sabbatical until October 15.

September 26-27 Shana attends Christian Formation Committee planning retreat in Dayton, Iowa.

27 Tim installs David Nickel at First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Nebraska.

October 2-12 Shana is on vacation

4 Tim licenses and installs Joel Beachy at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

11 Tim installs Chris and Kimberly Becker at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

18-21 Dave and Tim attend Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) in Archbold, Ohio.

Call to Prayer for Max Villatoro

The Friends of Pastor Max steering group is calling congregations to prayer the week of September 20-27, the six-month anniversary of Max Villatoro's removal to Honduras. Resources in English and Spanish have been developed for use in a worship service or as a longer prayer vigil and [can be found here](#). Please join us in fervent prayer for Max's return to his family, church and community as well as for justice to be served for thousands of other immigrants. Then, call Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson at 202-282-8203 and let him know you are praying that he will allow Max to return to his family.

Villatoro Family Blend Coffee

More organic, fair-trade Honduran coffee is being roasted and is available for purchase for \$15/bag. Proceeds from the coffee sales go to the Villatoro Family Fund. Place your orders at www.friendsofpastormax.org.

Other ways to support the Villatoros

- Visit the new website www.friendsofpastormax.org and sign up for updates and action alerts.
- Donate to the Villatoro Family Fund at www.centralplainsmc.org/donate.
- Write a note of encouragement to Max at max73villatoro@gmail.com.
- Write a note of encouragement to Gloria at 2018 Waterfront Drive, Lot #67, Iowa City, IA 52240.
- Follow [Friends of Pastor Max](#) on Facebook.

Need ideas for children's offering projects?

Check out these [Mennonite Central Committee projects](#)

OR these [Mennonite Mission Network projects](#).

Shine grants available

The Central Plains Christian Formation Committee is offering grant money to Central Plains congregations who need assistance buying Shine Story Bibles, poster packs, teacher handbooks or music. [Find the application here](#).

Quick study for the covenant

A study guide is now available for *Being God's Faithful Community, A covenant of spiritual practices*. There are four sessions, intended for use in every Central Plains congregation sometime before our 2016 Annual Meeting. Each congregation is encouraged to do this study and share feedback with the

conference board and staff on their readiness to adopt the covenant. [Find the covenant study on Amazon.com.](#) A new version was posted August 6. Be sure to make use of the covenant teaching videos on the [Covenant Resources page](#) of our website.

Have you been Seeking God's Will?

If your congregation has not yet studied *Seeking God's Will Together*, you are missing out! This study walks you through how to do communal biblical discernment. By equipping congregations for prayerful discernment and healthy communication, we believe we are more likely to see God's will be done "on earth as it is in heaven." Find the study [on Amazon.com](#) and see our page of resources at www.centralplainsmc.org/discernment-study.

Youth Escape 2016

Youth and youth sponsors, mark your calendars now for Youth Escape 2016, July 15-17, 2016. Our speaker will be Michele Hershberger of Menno-Night Show fame at Kansas City. Youth sponsors, pastors and youth who are interested in being on the planning committee, please contact Shana at shanaboshart@centralplainsmc.org.

Save the Date: Church Planting Summit

A Mennonite Church Planting Summit will take place March 31 – April 2, 2016, in New Orleans. Gather with more than one hundred Mennonite church planters, coaches, and leaders involved in planting the seeds of God's reign in many different contexts around our country. We will be hosted by a Mennonite church plant in New Orleans.

WDC Library

When Jewish student Lauren Winner went off to college, her family thought she'd come back a rabbi. Instead, she came back a Christian. In the DVD *Sabbath: Seven Ways of Christian Formation Inspired by the Jewishness of Jesus*, Winner examines Jewish spiritual practices Jesus knew that can greatly enrich Christian lives. Hospitality, mindful eating, fasting and mourning are among the topics she discusses in this 65 minute DVD divided into seven lessons.

Appropriate for individuals/groups, this DVD includes a discussion question sheet with five questions for each session.

Contact us at crlib@mennowdc.org / 316-283-6300. Search at [Conference Resource Library](#).

Servanthood Communication presentation

Based on Paul's teachings in Philippians, this teaching can be adapted to a special Sunday morning class, or a to a 2 to 4 hour workshop with breakout groups. Powerpoint slides provide the Roman historical background to how the emptying of Christ provides a new "mindset-model" for how Christians can speak and listen to each other with greater humility. For more information, visit Ted's website at www.restorativetrainer.com or contact him at tedlewis76@gmail.com. Ted is a trainer in Duluth, Minnesota, who is interested in building connections with Central Plains.

AMBS Webinar

Where is the Good News for Rural Folk?

Wednesday, September 30, 2015 1:00-3:30 p.m. CDT

Presenter: S. Roy Kaufman, AMBS Sessional Faculty

[Read description for Where is the Good News for Rural Folk?](#)

Peacebuilding Trainings

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience – the STAR Training

Fri-Sun Oct 2-4 & Sat-Sun Oct 17-18, 2015 in Minneapolis.

Details: www.starOct2015.eventbrite.com

Restorative Justice 101: Training for Practice in Everyday Life in St. Paul

Sat. Nov 21, 2015 in St. Paul. Details: www.rj101Nov2015.eventbrite.com

Sponsored by the [Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute](http://www.minneapolispeacebuilding.org).

Questions: contact donna@mnpeace.org or 612-377-4660.

Upcoming Events

Women's Retreat will be held September 19 & 20 at Swan Lake Christian Camp, Viborg, S.D.

Christian Formation Committee will meet September 26 and 27 in Dayton, Iowa.

Conference Board will meet October 30 & 31 in the Twin Cities.

Annual Leaders Retreat will take place April 22-24, 2016, in Schuyler, Nebraska.

Central Plains Annual Meeting 2016 will take place June 16-19, 2016, in Des Moines, Iowa.

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.

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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.