

Central Plains Mennonite Conference
Annual Meeting Workshops
June 21-22, 2024

Friday Workshops -

What is Missional Church (Michelle Hershberger)

What is Missional Church (in Michelle Hershberger's head)?

The question of what it means to be a missional church continues to challenge many congregations. Michelle Hershberger has been thinking about this over the past several years and is eager to engage in dialogue with workshop attendees around her understandings of this theme.

A Refresher from Yesteryear (Michael Danner)

Last year at Annual Meeting, Michael Danner raised the question, "Who gets to be part of the people of God and on what basis?" during our worship times. Through engaging the stories of the early church in the book of Acts, Michael will help workshop attendees reflect further on these questions and their implications for our churches today.

Ecuador Partnership Update (Joel Beachy/Nathan Luitjens)

Join us as we give updates and discuss the work of the churches in Ecuador, including reports from our partners within ICME (Indigenous Mennonite Church of Ecuador), ICAME (Mennonite Church of Ecuador - Quito Mennonite), and FEINE (Council of Indigenous Evangelical Peoples & Organizations). We are also excited to share our initial visits with former Rosedale Missions church plants along the coast. Church leaders, especially within the indigenous communities of ICME and FEINE, continue to express interest in higher theological education and training for future leaders. Come to learn more about these exciting prospects.

Introduction to Restorative Conversations for Church Communities (Ted Lewis)

While conflicts, harms and divisive issues continue to challenge churches nationwide, restorative frameworks are increasingly being used to address hard-but-healing conversations in both preventative and interventive ways. This workshop maps out conversations from the interpersonal 'heart-to-heart' level to the more formal level of facilitated dialogue. Perhaps you already have some capacity to 'hold space' where people can share out of their experiences, listen deeply to understand, and be heard well by those with oppositional perspectives. It all comes down to building up enough trust-credits to replace trust-debits.

Ted Lewis (Duluth, MN) is a restorative justice trainer and consultant who has over 25 years of experience facilitating both harms and conflicts, including church settings. In 2016 he founded the [Restorative Church](#) project. He serves on the Conflict Management Support Team for Central Plains.

Financial Insights and Tips: Steps to Improving Your Retirement Experience (Kent Blossom)

Has life gotten busy and your investment and retirement planning moved to the back burner? Kent Blossom, CFP® with Everence will help you get back on track with the key information to know to plan for retirement and investing and tax-advantage strategies, while keeping your family at the root of your decisions.

Friday Workshops (continued) -

Our Shared Future: An Experiential Activity on the Climate Emergency (Karla Stoltzfus-Detweiler)

Responding to changes impacting our climate is a significant way we can join Jesus in loving our neighbors. Join Karla Stoltzfus Detweiler, Climate Action Coordinator for MC USA and Sarah Fleming, MCC Central States Thrift Shop Coordinator, in an interactive session developed by Mennonite Central Committee. Explore the actions individuals and communities can take to survive extreme weather events, lessen the impacts of climate change, and build communities where all are cared for and treated justly.

Anabaptism at 500 (Mitch Stutzman)

The five hundredth anniversary of anabaptism in 2025 gives the church a unique opportunity to celebrate and dream. To celebrate the ways God has been faithful, and to dream about how we can mend what's been broken and lean into what God is doing now.

Join this session to learn more about the Anabaptism at 500 project and the vision behind the *Anabaptist Community Bible*. The session will include an update on the status of the project and a time for questions and conversation.

Saturday Workshops -

Additional Texts in John (Michelle Hershberger)

A study of other texts from the Gospel of John which we didn't get to in our worship. John 14 describes Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If following Jesus is the primary vocation of people in the church, how do we discover what that looks like? John's gospel includes many more stories about who Jesus is and how he invites us to live than we could explore during worship at Annual Meeting. In this workshop, Michelle will engage with other stories from John that help us to gain a deeper picture of Jesus and what it means to follow him.

Needed: A _____ Type of Leader (Michael Danner)

What kind of leaders are needed for the Mennonite Church today? The world around us is changing and the pressures experienced by the church are growing. While we believe the future of the church is not in doubt, there are questions about what form church will take. This uncertainty will require different types of leading than worked in the past. Michael will focus on the trends he is observing and the leadership skills he believes are needed for the 21st century church.

Crooked Creek Christian Camp Learning Visit (Nick Detweiler-Stoddard)

Youth summer camps & year-round adult retreat spaces have long been a vital aspect of ministry, both for outreach and for nurturing faith. Come visit our local Anabaptist-rooted Crooked Creek Christian Camp (CCCC) just 11 miles up the road from the delegate meeting site (directions & carpooling will be arranged)! Enjoy a tour of the Camp's campus and facilities. Learn about Crooked Creek's programs and ministries, history and future. Ask questions of staff, share wisdom from your own camp experiences, and ponder ideas for your local camp's ministry. (**Note:** the Saturday evening delegate supper & activities will also be at Camp, so you can simply remain on location following the afternoon visit, if you wish!)

Financial Insights and Tips: Steps to Improving Your Church Finances (Kent Blossom)

Calling church treasurers and church leaders, we will look at creating stewardship-driven financial policies, budgets and procedures -- that can encourage and inspire generosity, transparency and good communication about financial management within your church

GriefHow Do I Know I'm Healing? (Suzette Shreffler)

Grief is like a journey, and it can often feel like you're walking alone in the dark without a flashlight. It's easy to wonder if you're moving forward or simply wandering in circles. Right now, it may still be too dark to see if you're making progress. Suzette Shreffler, Co-Pastor of White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church will share signs of healing you can look for to make sure you're heading in the right direction. These signs are not one-time events, instead, they are a process you should go through and some of them repeatedly as you adjust to life without your loved one. Let's talk about peace in the midst of grief by turning to God's promises.

Immigration Injustice, What Can I Do? (Margie Mejia-Caraballo)

Join Margie Mejia-Caraballo to listen to stories and poetry about immigration injustice and the trauma of physical hardships, displacement and separation from family experienced by immigrants and refugees. Resources will also be discussed.

Hope and Resilience: Stories from Our Civil Rights Pilgrimage (Susan Janzen)

Come to hear from participants on our first Central Plains Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In addition to sharing stories from the people they met along the way, their reflections and pictures will highlight lessons that impact our own journeys through life. What is the good news of the civil rights era for the church today?