

Central Plains Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting 2025 Workshops

FRIDAY

“El Movimiento de la Iglesia Misional” (Missional Church Movement) y que significa para La Iglesia Menonita Hispana (en Español) – Byron Pellecer

¿Que es la “Iglesia Misional”? ¿Que son las ideas teológicas que forman la base de este movimiento? ¿Tiene este movimiento algo que decir a la Iglesia Menonita Hispana? En este taller Byron Pellecer se va a platicar de lo que él ha visto en el movimiento de la iglesia misional a que tiene esta movimiento para la iglesia hispana en los estado unidos.

A Mission Committee of Today – Eric Frey Martin

Many of our churches have a “mission” or “outreach” committee to address the ways in which our congregations can have an impact on spreading God’s love to our neighborhoods and around the world. Maybe you find yourself interacting with such a committee as a pastor or volunteer and sense a need for re-invigorating our thinking around these themes. How can we move from old ways and re-imagine how mission committees benefit today’s work of mission? In this session we will look at moving from colonialism to partnering, and how to reinvigorate ourselves for today’s changing landscape. Eric Frey Martin, Director for Constituent Engagement, will be leading this session looking at how we can see ourselves as part of God’s interconnected world and how our communities of hope can spread that hope to our neighbors both near and far.

“Peaceful Practices” – Alicia McLeod

This workshop will provide pastors, faith leaders, and everyday congregation members a guide to have difficult conversations and conflict in our current setting using Mennonite Central Committee’s Peaceful Practices curriculum. as a resource. Peaceful Practices can help us live out our belief in reconciliation, community, and peacebuilding in our church congregations, communities, and homes. This workshop will be facilitated by Alicia McLeod, the Peace and Justice Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee in the Great Lakes region.

Palestine 101 – Jonny Rashid

This training workshop will give attendees an overview of Palestinian/Israeli history. Rashid will address why Mennonites and Christians should be involved in taking action for Palestine and what shape our Anabaptist faith calls us to respond to the violence in the Middle East. Jonny Rashid is Pastor at West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship and a Mennonite Action National Pastoral Team member.

FRIDAY (continued)

Spiritual Direction and Wellbeing – Ruth Johnston

“Where two or more are gathered in my name, I am there,” Jesus tells us. In the practice of Spiritual Direction, a spiritual pilgrim and trained “co-discerner” meet together, welcoming the movement of the spirit as the pilgrim shares from life. Spiritual Direction is a place that cultivates hope, where struggles are honestly engaged, and joys celebrated. In this workshop Ruth Johnston will share about spiritual direction as a practice and discipline and also spend some time thinking about what makes for wellbeing in general.

Ruth is board certified as a chaplain and worked as a hospital chaplain for 14 years, after which she became a hospice grief counselor for 9 years. She has a MATS degree from AMBS, completed training to be certified as a spiritual director, and is currently one of the Wellbeing Specialists for The Corinthian Plan. She is ordained in the Mennonite Church USA.

They aren't coming to Sunday School: Helps from MennoMedia – Mitch Stutzman

The data is clear. People are not engaging with church and Sunday School the way they used to. Congregations everywhere are considering how to nurture faith in new ways. How do we engage in intentional Christian formation when our traditional mechanisms no longer work? Join this session to explore the ways MennoMedia through Shine children's curriculum is working to resource congregations and families with Anabaptist faith formation materials everywhere. Mitch Stutzman is Director of Development and Partner Engagement at MennoMedia.

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SATURDAY

¿Qué significa ser “comunidades de esperanza” en nuestro mundo hoy? What does it mean to be “communities of hope” given the situation we find ourselves in? (Bilingual/Bilingüe) – Byron Pellecer

En este taller, Byron Pellecer dialogará con la gente sobre qué significa ser comunidades de esperanza en nuestro mundo. Será una sesión de preguntas y respuestas para hablar sobre lo que ha visto y oído en los diversos roles que ha desempeñado en la iglesia y sobre el material que ha presentado en sus sermones durante el fin de semana. Responderá preguntas tanto en español como en inglés.

In this workshop Byron will engage with folks around the question of what it means to be communities of hope in our world. This will be a Q&A session to talk about what he has seen and heard in the various roles in which he has been involved with the church and with the material he has presented in his sermons over the weekend. He will take and respond to questions in both Spanish and English.

Ecuador Partnership Report – Nathan Luitjens & Participants of the 2025 Service/Learning Trip

This year we had our first service/learning trip to visit our partners in Ecuador. We will have several people who were able to attend the trip present with us for the seminar which will be a panel discussion with folks sharing from their experiences as well as a more detailed discussion of some of the joys and challenges facing the church in Ecuador at this time. Our partners are asking questions like, “What does it mean to be an Anabaptist/Mennonite church in the midst of the violence that Ecuador has been experiencing? And how can we be communities of hope in the midst of the social and economic challenges in Ecuador today?” Come out and hear how God continues to be at work among our partners in Ecuador.

From Common Ground to Sacred Ground: Navigating Disagreements and Discovering Relationships – Shuji Moriichi

When we cannot see eye to eye with those we deeply care about, what can we do? When ideological “fault-lines” sneak into the body of Christ from the political arena, how can we deal with it constructively? What unites us when we seem to find less and less in common with our neighbors? This workshop’s key resources (and inspiration) come from *Learning to Disagree: The Surprising Path to Navigating Differences with Empathy and Respect* by John Inazu (2024). Other resources include *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Shuji’s own short essays) and, more importantly, the participants’ own stories of trials and errors, concerns and desires. If you feel helpless, struck, and frustrated in our contentious culture, you are not alone and we can find a different way. Come join us in this informal conversation. Shuji Moriichi, M.A., M.Div., BCC, works as the manager of pastoral care at Mercy Medical Center in Cedar Rapids. Shuji is a member at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

SATURDAY (continued)

Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help” – Suzette Shreffler

The model used is from the Trauma Healing Institute, where the healing group offers a practical approach to engaging the Bible and mental health principles to find God’s healing for wounds of the heart. In the world today, many people have experienced war, ethnic conflict, floods, car accidents, domestic abuse, or crime. Many of them have been wounded inside of these things. The church should be helping its members who are suffering (Acts 20:28) as well as being light and salt in the world. This workshop is intended to help people recover from trauma and loss. It is particularly focused on helping the local church respond to hurting people in a way that is helpful, rather than harmful. Each lesson presents what the Bible and mental health best practices teach about how to heal from trauma. Learn about how you can bring it to your community!! Suzette Shreffler is co-pastor of White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church in Busby, MT.

Report from Asia – Jonah & Memee Yang

Jonah and Memee Yang have recently returned from a month of ministry in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. They each had over 100 people registered for the events they led. They will share their experiences including a PowerPoint presentation about their trip. Jonah is a credentialed leader in CPMC, offering leadership training and teaching for AMBS's “Journey” program in Asia. Memee and Jonah both provide compassionate care. Memee leads Sister Care, a program of Mennonite Women.

Women, Men and Money – Lyle Miller

A dollar bill is neither male nor female, but studies show that women and men have different experiences when it comes to money. Whether married or single, female or male, join with others as together explore some of these differences, including some of the particular obstacles women often face. Lyle Miller is a Stewardship Consultant with Everence.