

November/December 2009

Springs Ordains Pastor Casey Rohrer



Steve Sauder, left, conducted the ordination service for Casey Rohrer, center. Far right is Rachel Rohrer.

The Springs Mennonite congregation celebrated the ordination of Casey Rohrer on Sunday, August 23, 2009. Steve Sauder, Chair of Leadership Commission, officiated during the ordination and Kurt Horst delivered the sermon for this very special occasion. He challenged Casey and all of us with what he called "a gift of humble courage." Kurt reflected on Paul's words to Timothy to not be overcome with a spirit of fear, but rather demonstrate the spirits of power, love, and self-discipline.

Steve Sauder then requested that Casey and Rachel come before the congregation. Casey was draped with an ornate pray shawl which he wore during his graduation from Hesston College. Following the ordination questions, Steve invited

all ordained ministers present to come forward to lay hands on Pastor Casey and Rachel as the rest of the gathered congregation joined in the prayer of ordination. Steve anointed Casey and presented him with a bible as "a symbol and remembrance of the commitment that you made before God this morning, and a reminder of his presence with you in the ministry to which you are called."

We were so grateful for this day and pray for God's continued blessing on our pastor and his family. Following the service, the congregation celebrated this occasion around a delicious meal prepared by the hospitality committee.

—Nancy Green, Springs

Fun and Firebuilding at Camporee



This year's Camporee winners of the firebuilding contest were: (front, l to r) Samantha Haynes, Kara Waters, Anna Tomb, and Iliana Hunsberger, all from Kaufman. Back row is the boys' group from Springs (l to r): Nathan Bodes, Dakota Phillips, Noah Haglund, and Jacob Haglund.

Late afternoon on September 11, seventy children and sponsors converged on Pine Springs Camp near Jennerstown, for the Allegheny Conference annual Camporee. It was a rainy evening but there was much excitement in the air.

Camp began with games in the sports pavilion led by the Johnstown Service Adventure Unit: Joey Miller, Rose Lind, and Julie Janzen. Our theme for the weekend was hearing stories from the Bible, as four different storytellers came to share with us. Friday evening, Ezekiel (Merrill Miller, *Scottdale*) made an appearance sharing his story about God breathing life into the dry bones. Saturday morning, Phillip the Pharisee (Alan Kauffman, *Maple Grove*) showed up sharing with us the story of Solomon's wise choices and some not-so-wise choices. Saturday afternoon we heard the story of Naaman's servant girl (told by Rose Bender, *Stahl*) who was instrumental in Naaman's healing. On Sunday morning we were blessed to here from Naomi (Cathy Spory,

First) and the story of her daughter-in-law Ruth. We were reminded of the lessons that Bible characters teach us for following Jesus today.

During the weekend we also participated in recreational times, crafts, a hike and a sponsor hunt Saturday night. After supper on Saturday, the hay wagons came to pick us up and transport us to one of the highlights of our weekend: the annual firebuilding contest (which was held at Tim Mock's farm, since the camp did not permit firebuilding on the premises). The girls' team from Kaufman Mennonite and the boys' team from Springs Mennonite were the winners of that hot competition.

We would like to say thanks to Tim Mock, Tim Speigle, and Leon Holsopple for making alternative arrangements for the fire building contest. For kids who would like to join us next time, the dates for next year's Camporee will be September 10-12, 2010.

—Joy Catchen

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Endings and Beginnings... AMC Youth Leaders



Following Allegheny Conference, youth cabinet leaders shared a retreat time together. Back row (l to r): Krista Rittenhouse, Aaron Root, Evan Yoder, Isaac Tice, and Alex Spangler.

Middle row (l to r): Emily Spory, Kelsey Byler, Sarah Yoder, Jason Yoder, and Joy Cotchen, Youth Minister.

Front row (l to r): Annika Miller, Leah Speigle, Jenna Spory, and Alyssa Cable.

This year's Old/New Cabinet Retreat was held at the home of Joy Cotchen on August 9 and 10. The old cabinet from 2008/09 met with the new 2009/10 cabinet for a time of devotions, get-to-know-you activities, gift affirmation, ministry assignments and brainstorming ideas for the new year. One of the highlights of Old/New is a time of affirming gifts that we see in each other. During this time, each person has a turn in the center of the circle, while others share attributes they see in that individual. We concluded our evening with a hot dog roast around the fire.

The new cabinet members for 2009-10 are: Chairperson, Leah Speigle, *Blough*, Alex Spangler and Evan Yoder, *Maple Grove*; Isaac Tice, *Springs*; Alyssa Cable, *Kaufman*; Adult Reps, Jason and Sarah Yoder, *Maple Grove*; Conference Youth Minister, Joy Cotchen, *Stahl*. The Conference youth cabinet plans

activities for the youth of Allegheny Conference, including Leadership Retreat, SnoKamp, and Summer Conference. They also promote visits to Mennonite Colleges and visit different congregations throughout the year,

—Joy Cotchen



Pictured left is a quilt made by the youth at last year's Leadership Retreat at Camp Mantowagon. It was also on display at Summer Conference at Laurelville.

ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE

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Carol Benner-Chaffinch, *Tressler*

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Conrad Mast, *Scottdale* (2011)

◆ **Finance and Stewardship Commission**
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Jeff Jones, *Cornerstone* (2012)

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Marsha Carr, *Carpenter Park* (2010)
Miriam Ramer, *Pittsburgh* (2011)

◆ **Nominating Committee**
Julie Swartzentruber, *Pittsburgh* (2010)
Ray Yoder, *Maple Grove* (2010)
Jane Rittenhouse, *Scottdale* (2011)
Myrah Sinko, *Martinsburg* (2011)
Carol Benner-Chaffinch, *Tressler* (2012)
Matthew Alwine, *Thomas* (2012)

Youth Cabinet, 2009-2010

Chairperson:
Leah Speigle, *Blough*

Adult Representatives:
Jason and Sarah Yoder, *Maple Grove*

Youth Minister:
Joy Cotchen, *Stahl*

Big Valley/Northern:
Alex Spangler, *Maple Grove*
Evan Yoder, *Maple Grove*

Casselman Valley:
Isaac Tice, *Springs*

Johnstown:
Alyssa Cable, *Kaufman*

*Martinsburg/Altoona, Southeast Cluster
and Western do not have representatives
this year.*

Ervin Stutzman to Lead MC-USA

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board named Ervin R. Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., the denomination's next executive director at a special meeting held August 25, 2009. A search committee of ten members from across the denomination unanimously recommended Stutzman.

"Ervin is an energetic, strong pastoral leader with exceptional organizational and administrative gifts. He is a good listener and focused collaborator," says search committee chair David L. Sutter, South Bend, Indiana. "I believe Ervin will lead with Christ at the center as we consider and live into new directions in line with the dreams God has for Mennonite Church USA."

Currently, Stutzman is vice president and seminary dean as well as professor of church ministries at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg. He served on the Executive Board for Mennonite Church USA from 1999 to 2005 and as denominational moderator from 2001 to 2003.

"Ervin has provided wise and innovative leadership to the seminary, enhancing the quality of its program

and extending its reach," Fred Kniss, Eastern Mennonite University provost, says. "While we at EMU certainly regret losing him as a colleague and administrator, we know that Mennonite Church USA will benefit from his skills and experience. We view his departure as a gift we make to the mission of the larger church."

Also an author of several books, his most recent Herald Press publications are "Emma: A Widow Among the Amish," "Tobias of the Amish" and "Being God's People: Embracing Christian Faith from a Mennonite Perspective." His historical study on Mennonite peace rhetoric is expected to be published next year.

Stutzman replaces Jim Schrag, who announced his retirement last October. Schrag concluded his executive director position July 31 after 36 years of ministry, including thirteen years of denominational leadership. Acting executive director Ron Byler has been appointed to lead the church body until Stutzman begins in early 2010.

—June Krehbiel, MC-USA



Ervin R. Stutzman

Nurture & Education Notes



"Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

—Matthew 19: 13-14



The Nurture and Education Commission (Shirley Brandes, *Springs*, Miriam Ramer, *Pittsburgh*, and Marsha Carr, *Carpenter Park*) will be featuring brief pieces of advice in upcoming issues of AC News

with the hope of providing assistance for nursery staff, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, mentors, and any others who nurture our children. In addition, in order to help facilitate better ongoing communication with educational questions, they have created a new email address through the conference: education@amc-mcusa.org. Please contact them anytime with questions or comments and they will do their best to respond or direct you to the appropriate person or agency. What follows is their initial contribution.



All children, no matter what their age, what they look like, or what their behavior need to be loved. It is through us as teachers, youth group leaders, and church members that these children will experience (or not) Christ's unconditional love. Remember to greet each child warmly each time you see them. Always be ready with a smile, giggle, encouraging word, or just a hug. If he or she goes away learning but one thing, may it be that they are special in the eyes of Jesus and have a caring, safe environment in which to learn about their Savior.

Worship and Laughter Restore the Soul



David Garber, Thinagar and Petty Sitther, and Marilyn Bender enjoy the dramatized version of "Does God Have a Big Toe?" The story is a humorous look at the building of the tower of Babel.

"Worship and Laugh Together" was the focus of the Pastor's retreat held at Laurelville during the weekend of October 9-11. A smaller than usual group of pastors and spouses (approximately 20, plus 5 children) gathered in the Lodge of the retreat center. Friday evening began with laughter as Steve Sauder, *Gortner Union*, opened by encouraging everyone to share our names and a story about our name, identity or mistaken identity. After a time of worship and singing led by Duane Frederick, *Meadow Mountain*, storytelling continued as Tim Fetterly, *Oak Grove*, shared his faith story. He began by telling us that the person we saw before us was the sum of many experiences and ended by noting that it is exciting to think of what God might yet do with his life.

The refreshing blend of storytelling, laughter, singing, and worship continued on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday morning worship leaders Wayne and Roveen Yoder, *Pinto*, told us about their hobby of geo-caching using GPS units. Then they compared God's guidance to the way in which the GPS functions. The faith storyteller of the morning was Sandeep Thomas, *Asian Indian Christian Church of Pittsburgh*, who told of the ministry he and his wife Sufi have with Hindu students and challenged us with the "What if" questions that God may be asking. Our worship time concluded with the reading (in costume) of "Does God Have a Big Toe?" by Marc Gellman.

Saturday evening Marilyn Bender, *Pittsburgh*, led us in singing and worship on the theme of "Rest for the Weary." Sam and Mary Ann Yoder, *University*, shared deeply from their journey and reminded us that God wants us to be authentic—and that the journey continues. A time



Trina Siegrist, Steve and Anna Sauder, Bonnie Frederick, Sufi Thomas, and Roveen Yoder dramatize the story, "Does God Have a Big Toe?"

of prayer at the end was a meaningful part of this service.

Sunday morning, Marilyn recounted the Emmaus story and observed that when Jesus sat at table with the disciples, his story was linked with theirs. Donna Mast, co-pastor at *Scottdale* and interim Conference Minister, told her faith story and the paths she had followed (sometimes reluctantly) when answering God's call in her life. As we shared communion with each other, we were also reminded that in the breaking open of ourselves to each other in sharing, our story also becomes God's story.

Saturday afternoon and the evenings following the sessions were times intentionally left free for recreation: exploring the Laurelville trails, playing games of table tennis or cards, putting together a puzzle, or visiting. These were wonderful times of interaction with other pastors and spouses and their children, our own spouse, or quiet meditation. The camp setting and the fact that we were all staying and meeting together in the Lodge facilitated this interaction.

This retreat is a wonderful benefit offered by the conference to pastors and spouses. Those of us who took advantage of it were rewarded by feeling refreshed, renewed, and inspired by our time together. At first glance, worship and laughter may seem to be widely divergent, but during the weekend we were able to realize anew that both have the ability to restore the depleted spirit and soul.

—Merle and Evie Christner, *Pinto*

Roveen Yoder, Donna Mast, Steve and Anna Sauder, Marilyn Bender, and Sufi Thomas relax over a puzzle during the evening.



◆ PEOPLE ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



Michigan Couple Joins Laurelville Staff

Brian and Maria Paff have entered the respective roles of Director of Marketing, Advancement and Communications and Guest Services Host at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center as of September 1, 2009, and will be living on the campus in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania.

Brian will serve in the newly created position of Marketing, Advancement and Communications. The Executive Board of Directors and Leadership Team have been moving in this direction as a way to address the changing scenery for conference and retreat centers and camps in the 21st century. Brian will give leadership to promoting the Laurelville story through different forms of media including the recently updated website. Establishing a comprehensive development plan for Laurelville's future growth and service to the broader Mennonite Church will also be part of Brian's work.

A 2004 graduate from Calvin College, Brian arrives with rich experience in the nonprofit setting. He most recently worked in public relations and development at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids and with The Micah Center, a faith-based social justice advocacy group in West Michigan. "Laurelville's natural beauty and innovative programming make it a wonderful place to be," says Brian. "I am eager to meet the people and hear the stories that make Laurelville so unique and to work with its staff as it continues to respond to the needs of its guests in creative, dynamic ways."

Maria will be serving as the Guest Services Host for groups and families who come to Laurelville. Maria's role includes providing for the needs of all guests, primarily during the evening hours when most other LMCC staff are off duty. "Hospitality at its best" is a Laurelville trait that keeps guests returning to its welcoming space in Western Pennsylvania, and Maria's gifts and experiences will contribute greatly to this tradition.

Maria most recently served as a Resident Director in a dormitory at Calvin College, coordinating and supervising student life activities for over 200 residents. She possesses a strong background in adventure and experiential education as well as a Bachelor of Science in Restorative Community Justice from Bethel College in Newton, Kansas. "I am excited about contributing to an excellent guest experience at Laurelville," says Maria. "Offering hospitality to others is a real passion of mine, and I am pleased to be able to extend that gift to others in this setting."

Executive Director John Denlinger shares, "We are delighted and blessed to have sensed God's leading in this search for these two open positions. We never dreamed that both positions would be filled with a husband and wife team. We are excited about the energy and giftedness that this young couple will bring to our Laurelville team and to all of our Laurelville constituents."

—Sharon Striegel, Laurelville

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Conference Calendar ▼

November 7
Fall delegate session
in Philippi, WV

November 11
Pastors' meeting in
Bedford, PA

November 20-22
Youth Leadership
Retreat, grades 9-12
at Camp Mantowagon

December 3
Deadline for Jan/Feb
issue of *ACNews*

January 29
Deadline for March/April
issue of *ACNews*

January 29-31
SnoKamp at Laurelville,
grades 9-12

February 26
Goshen College Men's Choir
Scottsdale Mennonite Church

March 6
Spring delegate meeting

March 12-14
Junior High Retreat,
grades 6-8, at Laurelville

For First Mennonite, a New Chapter



*First Mennonite Church,
Johnstown, PA*

Owen and Mable Lehman walked into the Johnstown First Mennonite Church building on September 27, 2009, carrying 68 years of memories. This would be the final service for the congregation in that location. At 95 and 92 years of age, Owen and Mable recalled milking cows on Sunday mornings, getting their own children ready for church, providing bus transportation for congregational members, teaching Sunday school classes, participating in the church service, then frequently hosting guests for Sunday lunch. "Oh, sure we were busy," Mable said, "but we were much younger then and had lots of energy. It was worth all the work. We made so many friends over the years and many them still keep in touch with us even though many of them have moved out of the area."

The building at 705 Somerset Street includes the church sanctuary, several classrooms, a basement with a large meeting space and a kitchen, two apartments and an attached parsonage. The current congregation of 30-40 participants creatively attempted to cut energy costs by meeting in the basement area for the past two winter seasons, a sister congregation donated monies to assist in providing a new roof, and congregational members spent hours attempting to maintain the facility. However, faithful stewardship ultimately required making the difficult decision to leave the space where many congregational participants truly met Jesus and grew in their understanding of His teachings.

The Johnstown First Mennonite congregation first began meeting in the Kernville section of Johnstown in the fall of 1939. During the ensuing years, three different buildings housed this congregation and in September 2009, the congregation moved to a fourth Kernville facility, the YWCA just down the street from the former building on Somerset Street.

"The church that sees the Lord with a towel and recognizes Him as a suffering servant knows that it too must carry a servant's towel." These wise words from the sermon shared by former pastor Phil King (1978-1991) at the closing service, describe how this congregation has desired to live throughout its nearly 70-year history. The place of worship and ministry is changing to meet the present needs. However, current pastor Patti Simonsick reminded the congregation to pick up their towels: there are still more feet to wash.

—Cathy Spory, *First*

Right: Owen and Mable Lehman, founding members of Johnstown's First Mennonite in 1939. At 95 and 92 years, respectively, they have continued to support First's ministry in the Kernville neighborhood. Here they are pictured at the closing worship service in September.

