

March/April 2010

## Allegheny Group Helps MDS in Alaska

- Likely, all of us have had our hearts moved these last months as we have witnessed the widespread devastation in Haiti. We have seen how natural disasters can cause unimaginable destruction in a short time.

- In a completely different part of the globe—along remote stretches of the Yukon River in Alaska—another frightening natural disaster occurred. This time, the cause was a perfect storm of events: over 100" of winter snow, colder than usual temperatures (causing thicker ice to form in the river), and finally, unseasonably warm spring temperatures over 70 degrees, causing an early and rapid thaw upriver in the Yukon. Melting snow caused water levels to rise twenty-one feet above flood levels, backing up behind massive chunks of jammed ice, many of them the size of railroad cars—and all this just upriver from the town of Eagle, Alaska. Eventually the water gushed through the ice wall like a giant dam bursting. The huge chunks of ice then gave way and came crashing at terrifying speeds into any homes in their path along the river banks. Dozens of native Alaskans lost their homes and belongings, though thankfully there was no loss of life.

- Once the water and ice receded, MDS was quick to respond throughout the summer and fall, sending many volunteers to clear debris and rebuild homes in the affected river towns. They were also joined by Christian relief agency Samaritan's Purse as well as the Federal agency, FEMA. Both groups were instrumental in furnishing supplemental building supplies and tools.

- In July and September, a total of eleven from Allegheny Conference joined forces with MDS. Ten assisted with efforts in Eagle, Alaska, just

west of the Canadian border, and one volunteer, Darin Lehman, headed further west to Stevens Village (several hours flight north of Fairbanks). Three participated from Stahl (Dwight Gindlesperger, Glenn Lehman, and Darin Lehman), one from Kaufman (Dan Yoder), and five came from Thomas (Jordan Speigle, Stan Thomas, Mike Mock, Stephen Mock and Timothy Mock). Additionally, two others joined the group from other area churches: Don Mintmier from Emmanuel Baptist, Johnstown and Terry Struky from Shanksville United Methodist Church.

- Though roughly half of the group had served with MDS before, this was the first time for the entire group to visit Alaska, particularly such a remote area as this. Each was inspired by the chance to use their skills to help these flood victims and, in spite of the recent devastation to the area, they were struck by the beauty of the landscape.



***Above: The water and ice had receded by summer, but the destruction of many homes, moved right off of their original foundations, was still evident.***

***Below: Water and massive ice chunks flooded the town of Eagle, destroying this home in May, 2009.***





**Mike Mock (left) works a chain saw while Jordan Speigle steadies the lumber as they help reconstruct one of the new homes in Eagle, Alaska**

Native Alaskans in these small, remote villages subsist mostly with what the local surroundings provide as far as food and lumber. Specific supplies and mail arrive by small plane several days a week. Otherwise, residents do without. MDS volunteers learned to be innovative by salvaging housing supplies from abandoned homes which had been damaged in the flooding.

Work days for the group of eleven were long and demanded hard physical labor. Awake by 6:00, volunteers boarded buses after some breakfast, picked up needed tools, and reported to various jobs by 7:00 am. The work day continued for 8-12 hours. The men completed a variety of tasks such as installing floors, plumbing, cabinetry, electrical wiring, insulation, drywall

and trim, and some even constructed an entire log cabin within two days. Others built trusses and installed metal roofs and siding. In the evenings, they relaxed "Alaskan style": spotting Caribou and moose, panning for gold in the nearby Yukon, and sitting around a campfire.

The Allegheny volunteers were able to work alongside many local residents, who shared interesting stories of enduring life in that rugged area. They thanked our group over and over for all their hard work. One of the young men from Stahl was fortunate enough to receive a treasured gift by one of the new homeowners: a large moose antler. When it came time to take leave, many residents accompanied them through town to the airstrip. As they boarded the commuter plane, they noticed that these typically stoic Alaskans were choked up with emotion. It turned out to be a rich time of building—both houses and relationships.

—Jane Eanes, Scottsdale

## New International Ministry Venture



**Sandeep Thomas shares with members of the AICCP congregation following the farewell service.**

On Sunday, January 31, the Asian Indian Christian Church of Pittsburgh hosted a farewell service and meal honoring their associate pastor, Sandeep Thomas. Sandeep will be starting work with PRISM, which is a ministry outreach to international college students. The afternoon service began at 4:30 and included words of blessing and commissioning from Thinagar Sittler of the AICCP church, Dr. Raneer Jegasothy, AICCP Treasurer, John Bender of Pittsburgh Mennonite, and the

director of PRISM, Scott Boyd. Sandeep and Sufi, along with their children Ahia and Andrew will be attending the Pittsburgh Mennonite Church as part of this ministry transition.

Sandeep has served the AICCP for 2 years and is following his call to build a Christian witness among the Indian and Nepalese student populations who are coming from Hindu traditions. He views this work with PRISM as

a blessing because he will be working alongside PRISM's specialized team which has a long history of effective ministry among international students. Sandeep shared some of the opportunities for Indian student ministry in Pittsburgh. Every year Pittsburgh welcomes 7,000 international students. In recent years, the largest percentage of these are from India and China. These students represent the future leadership of their countries and when they return, their impact could be significant. Thus Pittsburgh has become an international mission field, particularly to China and India.

Scott Boyd, the Director of PRISM, explained that it is a ministry that has been birthed by churches, works with the church, and ultimately exists to enhance the international student ministry of the churches in the network which share the passion of bringing a Christian witness to people of different faiths. It is because of this relationship with the local church that Sandeep's move to PRISM is something that holds promise for the ministry which awaits him in the months ahead.

—Conrad Mast, Scottsdale

Photo credits: p. 1a, Glenn Lehman; p. 1b, NPS photo; p. 2a, Mary Litwiller, MDS; p. 2b, Conrad Mast; p. 3a, Rebecca Dyck; p. 3b,c,d, MCC; p. 4, Ken Gingrich; p. 6, Sarah Yoder; p. 7, Philippi SA Unit; p. 8, Brian Paff.

### March/April Year Volume 67 Number 2

Allegheny Conference News (ISSN 0746-7362) is published six times a year. Periodical postage paid at Scottsdale, PA 15683 and at additional mailing offices. Postal Service Registration #0013-800; **Postmaster:** Send change of address 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 1001 Arthur Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683.

Known office of publication: Jane Eanes, editor, *Allegheny Conference News*, 1001 Arthur Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683, phone (724) 887-0273; e-mail: [sendamcnews@gmail.com](mailto:sendamcnews@gmail.com). Printed in USA.



# Remembering the Life of Peter Dyck



Peter J. Dyck, heralded as a longtime MCC service worker and administrator, renowned storyteller, Mennonite pastor, and author died of cancer on Jan. 4, 2010 at the age of 95 in his home in Scottsdale.

Peter was born on December 4, 1914 in Lysanderhöf, Russia. When he was a young child during a famine and typhoid epidemic, he was on the brink of death when a shipment of food relief from North American Mennonites via the newly-created MCC saved his life. This personal connection with MCC's origins was of great importance to him. At the age of 12, his family emigrated to Saskatchewan. Peter later often recounted his father's difficult decision to move the family of nine children to Canada, leaving behind all relatives and his position of leadership in the Mennonite community in Russia.

Peter graduated from Goshen College with a BA in English. In June 1968 he completed his Masters of Divinity degree at Bethany Theological Seminary, Chicago. Waterloo University in Ontario granted him an honorary doctorate in 1975 in recognition of his years of service.

During WWII he served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in England, where in 1945 he married Elfrieda Klassen, an MCC nurse. Immediately after the war Peter and Elfrieda transferred to Holland to direct a massive relief program. He was later knighted by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands in recognition of MCC's feeding and clothing program. It was during this period that MCC grew into a global relief and service agency providing service "in the name of Christ."

After the war, Peter and Elfrieda moved to Germany to take care of thousands of Mennonites who had fled from the Soviet Union.

They established refugee camps and transported over 5,500 to South America. Most went to Paraguay, some to Brazil and Uruguay. Still others emigrated to Canada. The popular Mennonite children's book *Henry's Red Sea* told this story from the perspective of a Russian refugee boy. The Dycks themselves recounted their experience in their 1991 book *Up From the Rubble*.

From 1950 to 1957 Peter served as pastor of the Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kansas. Then Peter and Elfrieda with their two daughters, Ruth and Rebecca,

returned to Europe to direct the MCC program there and in North Africa. He also was responsible for MCC's East-West program, visiting Russia seven times.

In 1967, they relocated to the MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa. where he added the role of director of constituency relations until his retirement in 1982. In 1995, Peter and Elfrieda moved to Scottsdale, Pennsylvania. to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

For two decades after his "retirement" from MCC he traveled to speak in churches, schools and at retreats. He was well-known among the Amish and Mennonites for his inspiring stories, was popular in his 70's and 80's at Mennonite high schools and colleges for his ability to engage young people, and still packed auditoriums when he spoke at Goshen at age 90. In 1993, he received the "Culture for Service" alumni award. He was a passionate advocate for peace, conflict resolution, justice and tolerance. He promoted and embodied active participation in bringing about peace in the world.

In addition to *Up from the Rubble*, Peter is the author of three children's books (*The Great Shalom*, *Shalom at Last* and *Storytime Jamboree*), a collection of his stories (*A Leap of Faith*) and a meditation on growing old gracefully, *Getting Home Before Dark*. His spellbinding storytelling was captured on three videos produced by the Menno-Hof in Shipshewana, Indiana. He also wrote 17 volumes of "Stories from Opa" for his grandchildren.

Peter donated his body to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, the last service which he could perform for mankind.

—Jack Scott, Scottsdale



**Above: Peter, while serving for MCC, circa 1960**

**Left: Recent photo of Peter Dyck in his home, 2008.**



**Peter and Elfrieda, 1948, in Bremerhaven, Germany as they prepare to escort a group of refugees.**



**Peter pictured with former MCC Executive Secretary, Orie Miller, 1970.**

## Pittsburgh Convention: “Bridges to [the] Cross”



**Above: Allegheny Conference members who are currently serving as part of the adult and youth planning teams for the MC-USA Convention 2011: (front, l to r) Alyssa Cable, Erin Clymer, Joy Cotchen. (back l to r): Marilyn Bender, Karen Howard, Donna Mast.**

Planners for the Mennonite Church USA Convention 2011 focused on both their mission and setting during the convention planning committee meetings as they met for the first time Jan. 14 to 16 in downtown Pittsburgh, Pa., site of the next national gathering. Youth and adult planning committees joined together to discern the theme and initiate other convention plans.

After two-and-a-half days of prayer, reading Scripture and small group brainstorming, "Bridges to [the] Cross," and 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 surfaced as the theme and Scripture text for the next convention. Convention dates are July 4 to 9, 2011.

Pittsburgh, known as the City of Three Rivers, is connected by many bridges. Planners agreed on the importance of being missional within one's context and surroundings and used the bridges and rivers idea to connect with their theme.

"The committee recognized that the theme is two-fold. First, as instruments of Christ's reconciliation, we, too, have many bridges to

cross. Second, God calls us to shape our culture as ambassadors for Christ, instead of continuing to have our culture shape us. We are called to serve as bridges to Christ," Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, director of Convention Planning for Executive Leadership, explained.

A high point of the weekend included discussion of a proposal from the Intercultural Relations Reference Committee that suggested Convention include a day of showcasing and celebrating the gifts and talents of racial/ethnic members and congregations. Planners welcomed this proposal with excitement and affirmation.

Another high point came after learning that the David Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, where the Mennonites will gather, is one of the largest green buildings in the United States. It is certified with a Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Building Rating System, rated by the U.S. Green Building Council.

"We want to challenge our attendees to partner in our attempts to be the greenest convention this center has ever seen," said Stephen Kriss, Philadelphia, Pa., adult committee member and Franconia Mennonite Conference staff.

Planners hope the churches within a few hours of western Pennsylvania will be willing to sponsor those at a distance. "The majority of our constituents live fewer than four hours from Pittsburgh," noted Marty Lehman, director of administration and advancement for Mennonite Church USA. "This majority will have decreases in travel costs to convention. It is our hope they will consider giving 10 percent of their fund-raising dollars to other groups hesitant to attend convention due to cost and distance."

Committee members ended the weekend with prayers of thanks and praise for the Lord's leading and for the opportunity to be involved in this work for the broader denomination.

—Mennonite Church USA staff

The 135th Annual Summer Conference will be held August 6-8, 2010 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. The theme for the weekend will be "Compelled by Christ's Love." The representing agency will be Mennonite Publishing Network. There will be worship services Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:00 as well as Sunday morning starting at 9:30 a.m. There will be reporting and seminar times on Saturday with babysitting for children under the age of 5 (not available over meals and free time). Separate activities are being planned for children (ages 5-11), junior high (ages 12-14) and youth (grades 9 through 12). Please note that Friday evening meal is NOT included in a meal package. Mark your calendars and plan on attending this time of worship, reporting and fellowship!

**ALLEGHENY MENNONITE CONFERENCE: REGISTRATION FORM**  
**135<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING – AUGUST 6-8, 2010**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONGREGATION/AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (NO phone reservations, please note: the conference office will close at noon Wed., Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> until after this event)

List **everyone's name (for NAMETAG purposes)** and the ages of children (*for better planning of children's activities*)

Name of those attending	Children's ages	Name of those attending	Children's ages
1. _____	_____	4. _____	_____
2. _____	_____	5. _____	_____
3. _____	_____	6. _____	_____

**YOUTH REGISTRATION** (completed grade 9 - grade 12) (staying in the Lodge, remember to bring your own linens)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Cost \$85.00 (which includes meals, lodging, and conference fee) Total youth \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE FEE**

Whether registering for all or any part of conference: the fee is \$6.00 per person and \$3.00 per child ages 3-11

Number of adults \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of children (ages 3-11) \_\_\_\_\_ x \$2.50 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Conference Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**LODGING** (The rooms/sites are charged with one/two persons per room per night: *for each additional adult it will be \$10 per person per night*: Children up to age 11, lodging is free)

Rates per night are: Solarhouse/Guesthouse \$ 99 Cottage room \$75 (Linens are not provided for the cottages)

Camp Site with hookups (please designate which hookups are needed) \$25.00 (water \_\_\_/electric \_\_\_/sewer \_\_\_)

Camping site with only water or no hookups \$15.00 (water \_\_\_ no hookup \_\_\_)

Indicate lodging preference \_\_\_\_\_

Check which night/nights you will be staying: Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging requests will be on a first come first serve basis

# Of nights \_\_\_\_\_ X rate \_\_\_\_\_ = Total Lodging \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MEALS must be PRE-REGISTERED for by JULY 20** (Children 2 and under are free)

*Meal Packages* (Saturday brunch through Sunday noon- does NOT include Friday evening)

	# of people	cost	total
3-11 years	_____ x	\$17.50	_____
12-yrs-adult	_____ x	\$35.00	_____

Total Cost of Packages \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Individual meals*

MEALS:	3-11 YRS.	12-ADULTS
( <u>not</u> included in pkg.) Fri Supper	_____	_____
Sat. Brunch	_____	_____
Sat. Supper	_____	_____
Sun. Breakfast	_____	_____
Sun. Lunch	_____	_____

MAIL TO:  
 Allegheny Mennonite Conference  
 PO Box 12  
 Somerset, PA 15501  
 Or email as a PDF to: office@amc-mcusa.org

Individual meals are \$10.00 per adult and \$5.00 per child per meal with the exception of Sunday Breakfast which is \$7.50 per adult/\$3.75 per child  
 All meals must be paid upon registration or upon check-in  
**ALL MEALS NEED TO BE REGISTERED BY JULY 16 with no refunds**

TOTALS	Conference Fee	Youth	Lodging/ Camp Site	Meals	Grand Total	Deposit (please pay at least ¼ of total)	Balance Due

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED OR DATED BY JULY 16<sup>TH</sup>. Any registrations postmarked after July 16<sup>th</sup> will be charged a \$15 (per person) or \$30 (per family) late fee with no meals available!



# SnoKamp: Living to Please God



**Pastor Jim Gay, campus chaplain at Pitt - Johnstown, captured the attention of SnoKamp attendees with his animated messages.**

Late January, freezing temperatures, and the appearance of snow and ice, can mean only one thing for the youth of Allegheny Mennonite Conference: SnoKamp! Once again, an amazing time of music, worship, and fun were had by all this year at SnoKamp 2010.

On Friday January 29th, youth groups from all around Allegheny Conference began

to assemble at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center in Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania for a weekend of fun-filled activities and a time of praise and worship to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The weekend kicked off Friday night with a music and worship session followed by Jim Gay, the Campus Chaplain from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, who served as the energetic and comical guest speaker for the weekend. This year's theme for SnoKamp was "Living to Please God", which Jim mapped

out for the group throughout a four-part series, based on the key scripture taken from I Thessalonians 5:12-24 and described how as Christians, we need to be living a life that is pleasing to God and take time to seek God's will for our lives, even through the many trials and tribulations we may face along the way.

Over the course of the weekend, the youth also participated in several workshops conducted by Kaufman Pastor Don Hamsher, Pastor Alan and Nancy Kauffman of Maple Grove Mennonite Church, the Johnstown Service Adventure Unit and a number of college reps from Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen, and Hesston Colleges. Outdoor activities, lots of snacking, and frequent card and table games were all examples of events that took place throughout the weekend. On Saturday evening, an entertaining talent show was conducted by various youth groups and sponsors, with offerings ranging from comical skits to singing about Star Wars, to "mug tapping," and even the art of feeding cookies to others!

The weekend came to a close Sunday morning with a meaningful time of music and worship, led by Seth & Theresa Crissman, a final session by Jim Gay, and the recognition of this year's graduating seniors. Once again, this year's SnoKamp was a true blessing to all involved, as new friends were made, memories were created, and lives were touched.

—Sarah Yoder, Maple Grove

## College News

Several Allegheny college students were listed on the fall Dean's List for their respective colleges, meaning each earned semester grades of 3.75 or higher:

**Allison Eanes**, freshman (Elementary Ed) at EMU, from Scottsdale.

**James Hall**, senior (Biochemistry) at EMU, from University.

**Rachel Mast**, junior (Art) at Goshen, from Scottsdale.

**Annika Miller**, freshman (Elementary Ed) at Goshen, from Scottsdale.

**Autumn Miller**, freshman (Social Work) at EMU, from Stahl.

**Hannah Miller**, senior (Peace/Justice) at Goshen, from Scottsdale.

**Anita Opel**, sophomore (Art) at Goshen, from Glade.

**Leah Rittenhouse**, freshman (Disaster Service) at Hesston, from Scottsdale.

**Joseph Spory**, junior (Photography/Art) at EMU, from New Life.

**Michael Spory**, junior (History/Social Studies Ed) at EMU, from First.

**Emma Stahl-Wert**, junior (Environmental Sustainability) at EMU, from Pittsburgh.

**Anna Weaver**, freshman (Psychology) at EMU, from Scottsdale.

**Larisa Zehr**, senior (Peacebuilding/Development) at EMU, from Pittsburgh.

## ◆ Service Adventure in Philippi ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



**The Philippi SA Unit, pictured here on a skiing "learning component" trip in Canaan Valley, West Virginia. From left to right: Marcos Wright Kuhns, Jared Christophel, Beth Wright Kuhns, Maggie Neuman, and Darlene Klassen.**

Last month AC News profiled the Johnstown, PA Service Adventure unit. This month the the Service Adventure group in Philippi, WV would like to introduce themselves. The Unit in Philippi was one of the first Service Adventure locations available, and 21 years later, has become the longest standing location in the program. The unit is hosted by Philippi Mennonite Church, a small house church. While Philippi Mennonite is definitely a new type of church experience for almost every participant, it doesn't take long for everyone to feel at home. Read on to learn more about each of us, and perhaps we will still meet many more from AMC this year.

We are Marcos and Beth Wright Kuhns, and are second-year leaders of the Service Adventure unit here. Originally from Colorado and California, respectively, we've learned a lot about the joys and challenges of living in a small WV town over the past two years in Philippi. Along with our unit activities, Marcos keeps busy working as a web developer, and Beth is a substitute teacher and volunteers at a local clinic.

My name is Maggie Neuman. I am from Souderton, Pennsylvania and I am eighteen years old. Right now I work for Headstart and Broaddus Hospital. I really enjoy working with the kids and watching them learn and grow. At Broaddus Hospital I work in the long term care and social services departments. Service Adventure has been

a great opportunity for me. I am meeting a lot of new people and learning to look at the world in new ways. I am really excited about the next four months to come. When I go home I hope to attend Temple University and major in social work; however, working at Headstart has had me considering education as a possible alternative.

I am Jared Christophel from Goshen, Indiana. My passion is basketball. I currently am working in the first grade at Philippi Elementary School

on Mondays, helping as a teacher's aide. The remainder of the week I work at World Vision Storehouse in customer service. This entails loading heavy objects, pricing, and cleaning. I plan on studying physical education with a minor in coaching (basketball) at either Hesston College or Eastern Mennonite University.

Finally, my name is Darlene Klassen and I am from Germany. I work in a thrift store, run by a local mission named Heart and Hand, as well as assisting a teacher in the local elementary school. After I graduated from school I wanted to do something different and experience something new. Service Adventure has turned out to be a great opportunity for me to get to know other people, to serve people, and especially to grow in my faith and listen carefully to God's voice. After Service Adventure I would like to study social work.

—The Philippi Service Adventure Unit

**ACNews**  
1001 Arthur Ave.  
Scottdale, PA 15683  
ph. (724) 887-0273  
e-mail: [sendamcnews@gmail.com](mailto:sendamcnews@gmail.com)

**Allegheny Mennonite Conference Office**  
PO Box 12, Somerset, PA 15501  
ph. (814) 443-2007 fax (814) 445-3418  
e-mail: [office@amc-mcusa.org](mailto:office@amc-mcusa.org)  
[www.amc-mcusa.org](http://www.amc-mcusa.org)

## Conference Calendar ▼

### March 6

Spring Delegate Session at Blough Mennonite

### March 12-14

Junior High Retreat, Laurelville

### April 9-11

Women in Conversation Weekend, Laurelville

### April 11

Tri-State Relief Music Day Cherry Glade Conservative Menn. Church, Accident, MD

### April 17

Tri-State Relief Work Day Springs Mennonite Church

### May 1

Relief Sale Bike-a-Thon Begins and ends at Maple Grove, Belleville

### May 24-27

Minister's Spring Seminar, Laura Brenneman on New Testament Study

### July 16-17

Tri-State Relief Sale McHenry, MD

### August 6-8

Annual AMC Conference Laurelville

## McLaren Joins Music and Worship Leaders



**Brian McLaren led an animated discussion from the gospels on Sunday morning.**



**Jeff Raught (left), portraying a comical Angel Gabriel, proclaims the birth of the infant Jesus to a rough-around-the-edges shepherd (Ted Swartz) during a worship gathering.**

Pastors and worship leaders from across the Mennonite Church in the United States and Canada gathered at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center for the Music & Worship Leaders' Retreat on January 8-10.

A rich tradition since 1987, this year's program featured the presence of special guest Brian McLaren, a renowned pastor, writer, and speaker who is a leader of the emergent church movement.

The weekend centered on the lectionary theme for the upcoming Lenten season: "Holding on and Letting go." Marlene Kropf, MCUSA Minister of Worship, encouraged attendees to understand the deeper implications of Lent. "Lent is about how we become lost," she said during Friday evening's opening session. "Grace," she added, "reconnects us to our true selves."

Kropf spoke of the importance of personal transformation during the lenten season and the key role worship leaders can fill for their congregations. "We are not explicitly theological; we prefer to do our theology implicitly: through poetry, readings and songs."

Plenary sessions walked participants through some of the hymn selections and Scripture passages provided in *Leader*, a worship resource periodical for Anabaptist congregations. Under the guidance of Kropf, Eastern Mennonite University professor Ken Nafziger, and worship resource specialist Marilyn Houser Hamm, participants were given the unique opportunity to learn new skills for worship leading through observation. The result was a musical delight which participant Gayle Yoder described as "a taste of heaven" in a post on Laurelville's blog after the weekend.

For others, the weekend represented an opportunity to engage in relevant dialogue with other leaders, ranging in topic from hymn selection and visual design to theological underpinnings in the context of worship.

Brian McLaren's presence emphasized the latter. "He helped us to gather the rich diversity of insights within the group, allowing us to appreciate the fullness of Scripture passages for the Lenten season," observed Derek Yoder, of Plainfield, Illinois. McLaren pointed out that the worship leader's role is to allow for the congregation to fully enter into God's Word during worship and to listen to the Holy Spirit. "When dealing with Scripture," he warned, "what we focus on often determines what we miss."

Ted Swartz and Jeff Raught, of Ted & Company TheaterWorks, were also on hand to share several sketches with the group and engage participants in constructing their own readers' theater out of a Lenten passage.

"Drama in worship allows people to think about the Bible in different ways," said Lisa White, a Lancaster, Pennsylvania resident who took part in the Sunday morning sketch that unfolded. "Ted walked us through the process of creating a story to share it with others."

White, herself an actress with a theatre degree from EMU, left with renewed energy for sharing the gifts of dramatic interpretation with her church.

This is the hope with which Laurelville plans each Music & Worship Leaders' Retreat. "Few would say it provides rest or relaxation," commented Angela Dietzel, "but rather it recharges through powerful song, rich worship experiences, and opportunity to reconnect with friends."

The retreat occurs each January, with registration regularly filling up in advance. Laurelville has added an additional program in the fall—Worship Arts Training—which offers participants hands-on workshops to strengthen worship-leading practice. Worship Arts Training is scheduled for September 24-26, 2010; Music & Worship Leaders' Retreat will happen again January 7-9, 2011.

—Brian Paff, Laurelville