

March/April 2011

Amended Proposal Headed to AMC Delegates



As many in Allegheny Conference may know, there have been discussions at previous delegate sessions regarding remodeling the structure of our conference to more effectively minister to those in our region and

to better utilize staff and financial resources. In moving forward with a restructuring plan based on previous work and feedback from delegates at the November, 2010 meeting, Conference leaders met with members of Faith, Life, and Procedures Committee (FLP) to fine-tune a proposal which they hope delegates will adopt when they meet again on March 5 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church. This Ad-hoc committee (including members of FLP, John Bender, Moderator; J. Lorne Peachey, Moderator-elect; Donna Mast, Interim Conference Minister; Joy Cotchen, Minister of Children and Youth; Torin Eikler, Pastor of Morgantown Church of the Brethren; and John Denlinger, Laurelville Director) proposes a two-year trial of a new ministry structure. As our Conference lives with this new model for the trial period, we will discover what works well and what needs to be adjusted. Moderator John Bender acknowledged that there are no perfect structures, so he invites input, flexibility, creativity, as well as grace from others along the way.

Conference leaders will be proposing the following at the March meeting:

- Allegheny Mennonite Conference hire a full-time Conference Minister (or as close to full-time as we can afford) and a half-time Minister of Children and Youth. No other staff changes are suggested as part of the new structure.
- Leadership Council (a newly constituted body) will consist of an Executive Committee made up of Moderator, Moderator-Elect, and Treasurer. Additional members of this Council will be a representative from each region, a representative to Constituency Leaders Council (CLC), and one youth representative, selected by the Youth Cabinet. Conference staff will meet with Leadership Council as non-voting members.
- Leadership Council will form committees as needed, but the Nominating Committee will be the one standing committee. Leadership will also need to appoint ad hoc committees to address special needs or issues.
- Interviewing prospective persons for credentialing will be done by the Conference Minister along with pastors from the region (and perhaps the regional representative or another member of Leadership Council).
- Nominating Committee will select the Moderator, Moderator-elect, CLC and Regional Representatives to be affirmed or elected by delegates at the March meeting.
- Congregations will continue to appoint up to six delegates for Conference delegate meetings that will occur three times per year, similar to the way they do now. The fall delegate session will be optional.
- Congregations will be grouped in regions. Pastors will meet regionally with the Conference Minister for mutual support and encouragement. Regions are encouraged to develop relationships and work together in mission.

To summarize roles of Conference Minister and Congregations:

The Conference Minister will:

- **meet with pastors to equip and encourage them in their ministry**
- **assist with or provide resources for congregational and pastoral reviews**
- **work with leadership transitions across the Conference**
- **meet with Leadership Council**
- **provide oversight for Conference staff**
- **communicate Conference concerns to the denomination**
- **communicate church-wide policies and direction to the Conference**

Congregations are encouraged to:

- **associate as regions and meet to develop common ministries**
- **continue to do the work of the church:**
 - **worshipping God**
 - **training disciples of Jesus**
 - **and living missionally in their spot in the world under Holy Spirit's guidance**

Wayne Lasure Installed as Pastor at Oak Grove



Wayne Lasure was recently installed as pastor at Oak Grove, Grantsville, MD

What a beautiful brisk morning for a mountaintop experience on November 7, 2010 when Wayne Lasure was installed as the new Pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite Church. Temperatures were quite chilly but the congregation, family and friends gathered for this joyous occasion just outside of Grantsville, Maryland created a warm atmosphere.

Some glorious opening music was provided by Pastor Wayne's wife, Katy, and son, Eric Lasure. Doris Beal led the opening that morning, talking to us about "God's Gift of a Pastor." More special music was provided by friends of Wayne and Katy; the sound of the music was heavenly and greatly enjoyed by all.

Overseer Dave Garber gave the message that morning titled "Here I Am: Wayne's call to Pastor at Oak Grove." Dave read to us from Exodus 3 about Moses shepherding his flock. Dave spoke of how Moses was called in "the burning bush" to become a great leader. Paralleling that story, Wayne hunted on this very mountain for many years. He wasn't just on this side of the mountain hunting; God was calling him here. God was preparing a way. The Lord was familiarizing him with a new territory in a not-too-distant land. Dave also read to us from Isaiah 6:8 where the Lord asks,

"Whom shall I send?" Wayne replies, "Here I am, send me!"

The congregation at Oak Grove Mennonite Church is seeing the scripture of Psalm 37:23 at work in Pastor Wayne, directing his steps. Pastor Wayne's plans were to acknowledge the Lord in all his ways and to bring honor and glory to our Lord, so in return the Lord ordered Pastor Wayne's steps to Oak Grove Mennonite Church.

We thank you Lord for this process that was initiated by you. We praise you and thank you that you have chosen Pastor Wayne to be a shepherd of the flock at Oak Grove Mennonite Church. May you bless us with faithfulness in keeping Pastor Wayne lifted in prayer, that the thoughts and direction of his mind, the sights of his eyes, the hearing of his ears, the speaking of his words, the mediation of his heart and the steps of his feet would always be pleasing to you in bringing honor and glory to your Holy name.

We at Oak Grove Mennonite Church wish to extend a warm and loving welcome to Pastor Wayne, his wife Katy, and their family as we travel together to praise, worship and serve the Lord with our hearts, souls and minds.

—Denny Hetrick, Oak Grove



MCC Opportunities for the Young, Curious, Ready, and Restless!

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) calls the young, curious, ready and restless to SALT – a cross-cultural service experience for Christian young adults from the United States and Canada.

Serving and Learning Together (SALT) takes participants beyond Facebook to another country where they meet people face to face, build fascinating lives and add new friends. SALT volunteers live more-with-less, simply and "green" as they do practical service and watch God at work.

Assignments range from computer work to child care and church work to medical care. Young adults teach, work in agriculture and advocate for the less fortunate. A complete listing of openings can be found at salt.mcc.org, along with an application and more information about the program.

Applications are being accepted immediately for one-year assignments which begin August 2011. Participants need to be single, 18 to 27 years old, Canadian or U.S. citizens, actively participating in the life of a Christian church and committed to nonviolent peacemaking.

SALT is one of MCC's Global Service Learning programs for young adults. To learn more about MCC's other short-term programs, visit mcc.org/gsl

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Gearing Up for Tri-State Relief Sale

Volunteers met at Kaufman Mennonite Church on October 23, 2010 to prepare for the 13th TriState Relief Sale to be held July 15 & 16, 2011. The men built a youth picnic table and the ladies quilted and knotted comforters. The youth packed over 500 school kits to send to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). When parents and schools cannot afford basic school supplies, notebooks and pencils become precious commodities. Throughout the world, children and young people are ready to learn. But education remains out of reach for many – too often because families can't pay school fees or buy supplies or uniforms. Schools have insufficient funds as well. School kits and funds raised through relief sales like Tri-State are helping to make education available and possible for many.

The spring workday this year will be held on April 16, 9:00am – 3:00pm at the Springs Mennonite Church. Volunteers can choose from quilting, knotting, sewing or assembling school kits and wood working projects. Bring a covered dish and a friend and have a great time!

Looking ahead, the TriState Relief Sale volunteers will sponsor a bike/hike event on Saturday May 7, 2011 in Belleville, PA. All funds raised through this event for MCC will go where needs are greatest.

There are no entrance fees, but donations will be accepted. The first 20 in each event with a donation or pledges of \$25.00 or more

(bikers and hikers/walkers) will be guaranteed a tee-shirt. Registration begins anytime after 8:30am. Starting time is 9:00am and all riders and walkers are to be completed by 12:00pm.

Bike distances are 33 and 16.5 miles (shorter routes are available.) The walking routes consist of two loops of 4.5 and 6.5 miles. Of course, you are permitted to walk out and back for shorter distances if you cannot walk the loops.

Download the Sponsor Form on www.tristatesale.org. For more information, contact Alan or Nancy Kauffman at (717) 935-9965, Maple Grove Mennonite Church at (717) 935-2513, or by email at ank@pa.net. This is a great intergenerational activity where we can make a difference.

Millions of the world's poorest people don't have enough to eat and the numbers are rapidly growing. MCC is responding where the needs are greatest. Raising needed funds through the various annual Relief Sales, as well as through bike-a-thons, begin to respond to these growing needs worldwide. Spring and fall workdays significantly add to our Relief Sale totals, so thank you to the many who take part in these events.

—Harriet Berg, Springs



Top: Dan Yoder creates a youth picnic table during the fall workday at Kaufman.

Above: Dan Durst readies his bike for the 2010 bike-a-thon in Belleville.

Nurture and Education: The Flip Side

"And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering." ~ Jude 1:22, NLT

Take a coin from your pocket. Look at it carefully. Look very carefully. Examine all the details. Note at least three details you had never noticed before. Now flip the coin. Examine that side. Are both sides the same? Can a coin have only one side? Why all of this concern about a coin? Its purpose is to illustrate your faith. Faith is like a coin. It tends to have two sides. With belief in God, very often come questions, doubts, and confusion.

This is a part of the faith process. Without doubt, faith does not truly exist. There must be a part of us that doubts and struggles in order for us to have faith. We have all been there on our

faith journey. Perhaps we still are. If you 'doubt' this theory, remember that those who walked with Jesus had to walk through their moments of doubt (for instance: Matt 26: 75, Matt 16: 23, Matt 14: 30, Luke 8: 25, Luke 24: 36-43).

Now if we as adults experience two sides to faith, what must our young children be experiencing? This is why it is so important to encourage your students to ask questions. Some teachers might feel challenged or threatened. Instead, make it an adventure! Seek the answers together with your student. But you don't have to travel that journey alone. I invite you to share these questions with us at Nurture and Education. We would like to journey with you at education@amc-mcusa.org



A Missional Plan for AMC Congregations

Allegheny Mennonite Conference churches are looking to be transformed into missional congregations. We understand that God is working among us and we want to join that work. After nearly two years of visiting Conference churches and learning about the missional church movement from many sources, the Conference Missional Leadership presents this six part plan for congregations to use in transformational efforts. Churches are invited to study this plan and decide about their intention to participate in the steps that are outlined below.

Two things will be expected of a congregation that chooses to participate. First, the congregation needs to commit a period of six months to a year to the process of working through these steps, one at a time, and in sequence. Second, a person in the congregation needs to be called out for the purpose of leading in this process. This person will be the congregation's "missional leader." The AMC Missional Leader will coach, facilitate, and in whatever way necessary, help that person and the congregation work through this missional plan.

These are the steps that make up the Missional Plan:

Step 1: Dwelling in the Word. This step is meant for a group to study a passage of scripture by allowing the passage to speak to and through the participants so that they absorb new meaning that is relevant for them in their time and place. The passage that is chosen is John 20: 19-23.

Step 2: Appreciative Inquiry (AI). This step, prompted by the book, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations* by Mark Lau Branson, helps to examine our stories both as churches and individuals and to see what of our past informs us, encourages us, and guides our direction. As a tool, a good AI process helps us face the changes and challenges of the future with the best of our past and better understanding of our mistakes. AI needs to be understood as a tool that permeates all of the missional processes so that we see with positive eyes the work that God is doing among us.

Step 3: Developing a Missional Vision. By looking at a number of vision statements that come from our connections as AMC congregations with Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church USA, Allegheny Mennonite Conference, and comments that come from AMC conference discussions and Missional Leader visits, the congregation will look at the common missional themes that are present. The processing of this step will help put new meaning into the words of a missional vision and help the congregation take to heart these words as the core of who it is. The challenge is to think creatively of new ways to live out the words.

Step 4: Plunge (Participant Dwelling). This step leads the congregation to engage with its community in concert with Dwelling in the Word. The purpose of "Plunging" is to help better understand the current state of the community, recognize congregational reality vs. the reality of the community, develop ways that respond appropriately to reality, and discern God's vision for the future. By involvement with Plunging, a congregation will better see God at work in the community and be able to respond to God's call to join his work.

Step 5: AMC Missional Activities. One of the outcomes of the Conference Missional Leader's visits to all of the churches is a lengthy list of activities that churches have felt called by God to do. By critically looking at the list and identifying the ones that it is doing, each church is asked to use Appreciative Inquiry tools, hold its activities up to a missional lens, and examine them in light of community and congregational realities and Biblical commissions. Two questions will be asked in this step:

- A. Which activities seem most suited to the gifts and call God has equipped us with in our community?
- B. How do these activities build our relationships with those who need God's love?

The intent of this step is to evaluate the role of activities in the effectiveness of who we are as missional people.

Continued on page 7 (see Missional Plan)

The 136th Annual Summer Conference will be held August 5-7, 2011 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. The theme for the weekend will be "Investing in Hope." The representing agency will be Mennonite Mission 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
136th ANNUAL MEETING – AUGUST 5-7, 2011

NAME: _____ CONGREGATION/AGENCY: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____
 (NO phone reservations, please note: the conference office will close at noon Wed., Aug. 3rd 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 \$6.00 = _____

Number of children (ages 3-11) _____ x \$3.00 = _____

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 19 (Children 2 and under are free)

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

	# of people	cost	total
3-11 years	_____ x	\$18.00	_____
12-yrs-adult	_____ x	\$36.00	_____

Total Cost of Packages \$ _____

Individual meals

MEALS: 3-11 YRS. 12-ADULTS

(not 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 \$10.25 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 19 with no refunds

TOTALS	Conference Fee	Youth	Lodging/ Camp Site	Meals	Grand Total	Deposit (please pay at least 1/4 of total)	Balance Due

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED OR DATED BY JULY 19TH. Any registrations postmarked after July 19th will be charged a \$ 15 (per person) or \$ 30 (per family) late fee with no meals available!

SnoKamp 2011: “I’ve Got a Story to Tell you!”



Weekend speaker, Sue Conrad, who has served as associate pastor of East Chestnut Mennonite Church in Lancaster, PA

Chatter, laughter, and hugs filled the room as youth groups entered the Solarhouse at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center for Allegheny Mennonite Conference’s annual SnoKamp youth retreat. Friday night started off with a bang as Seth and Theresa Crissman and Becky and Derek King led powerful and awesome music. Then speaker, Lancaster pastor Sue Conrad, began her first of four sessions speaking on the topic “I’ve Got a Story to Tell You!” using scripture from Psalms 139:1-18. Sue shared powerful stories from her own life, interwoven with stories from the Bible. She challenged us to

look at the story God has given each of us and how, if we choose to follow Jesus, our story will become a most amazing adventure, led by God. The first worship was followed by “get-to-know-you” games including Bunkbeds and the Noodle Game. Finally ending the night with a 1:00 AM curfew, everyone shuffled off to bed.

Saturday morning started bright and early with devotions and then a hearty Laurelville-style breakfast. Our second worship session was followed by various seminars. Different seminar choices included “Storytelling & Puppetry” led by Cindy and Merrill Miller, “In the World but Not of the World” led by John Denlinger, “College Decisions” led by representatives from Goshen, Eastern Mennonite

University, and Hesston College, and finally “Called to Serve” led by members of the Johnstown Service Adventure Unit. The afternoon seminars were followed by a glorious hymn sing, and then free time. Many chose this time to go sled-riding on “Motel Hill.” Ramps were built, the snow was packed, and everyone hit the slopes. After some warm-up time, we had a nice dinner, and continued to our third worship session. A highlight of the evening was “SNAC” (Saturday Night at Camp), a talent show for all youth groups and individuals! And what a wide range of talents God has given us: some did dramatic skits, others performed vocals and instrumentals, and some even sang TV show theme songs. Following the talent show, the youth proceeded outside to play “Walk-A-Mile” and then to hangout around a fire. With a 1:30 AM curfew, everyone fell asleep quickly and woke up for early morning devotions.

After breakfast we had our last session where Sue challenged us to be the salt of the earth and to bring out the flavor of God’s Spirit in all we do. Senior recognition included Alyssa Cable (Kaufman), Alex Spangler (Maple Grove), Brody Thomas (Springs), Michael Chico (Tressler), and Eli Schrock (Grace Fellowship). Goodbyes were said and hugs were given as vans were packed to the rim with luggage. Goodbyes aren’t always the most fun thing, but knowing that the 30 Hour Famine, hosted by Springs Mennonite Church, is right around the corner keeps everyone happy until we meet again.

—Alyssa Cable, Kaufman

Below left: Seth Crissman and Becky King lead youth in singing during worship. Below right: All youth played an enthusiastic game of “Bunkbeds” on Friday night.



Goshen Sophomore Travels to Tanzania



Annika Miller, a mathematics major and daughter of Merrill and Cindy Miller of Scottdale, is participating in the Goshen College Study-Service Term (SST) in Tanzania -- on the coast of east Africa -- during this spring, along with 22 other students.

Annika left for Tanzania on Jan. 12 and will return to the United States on April 12. Ryan and Donna Sensenig, along with their children Isaac and Mara, are leading the unit. Ryan is associate professor of biology at Goshen College.

The students spend the first half of the term in Dar es Salaam, attending lectures and studying Tanzanian culture and the language of Swahili. Dar es Salaam is the administrative capital of Tanzania and its principal commercial city.

Students will travel to the northwest regions of Tanzania for the second half of the semester. The Mara region, one of 26 regions in Tanzania, is where students will be placed with families and in service assignments in rural locations. The capital

of the Mara region is Musoma, where there is a strong Mennonite presence due to the existence of Tanzania's Mennonite Church. The service assignments will include teaching at elementary and secondary schools, medical assistance, AIDS work, assisting in orphanages, and agriculture or water development.

When Tanganyika united with the island of Zanzibar to form Tanzania in 1964, the new country adopted the motto of "Freedom and Unity," or "Uhuru na Umoja" in Swahili. In keeping with this motto, Tanzania has become a well-spring of diversity. It is one of the few African countries with a peaceful history since independence and it is a country with about equal numbers of Christians and Muslims, the two dominant religions.

Tanzania has the largest land area among the East African countries and encompasses several geographical landmarks, including Mt. Kilimanjaro (Africa's highest peak), Lake Victoria (Africa's largest lake) and Lake Tanganyika (the world's second deepest lake).

Web updates and photos from the group are available from Goshen College's SST Web site: www.goshen.edu/sst. Letters can be directed to: KMT Eastern Diocese, Church Plot, Alykhan Street, Upanga, Box 5566, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

—*Courtesy of Goshen College*

As we intentionally pursue the relationships God has laid on our hearts, we will find that this will be a growing mission.

May God bless the churches of the Allegheny Mennonite Conference as we seek to be transformed into missional people. May we find the joy of responding to the needs of those around us—and around the world—in the name of Jesus.

—*Lawrence Brenneman, AMC Missional Leader*

Missional Plan (from pg. 4)

Step 6: Relationships in the Missional Church. This last step is the point to which all churches and church members should arrive. The reason for this is based on four realities.

- A. The character of God is best understood as one of desiring relationship. God is relational and we are made in the image of God, therefore this also should define the character of those who are the people of God.
- B. All of us have relationships, therefore all of us can be active participants in this aspect of mission.
- C. God is at work in our relationships. We need to ask God to reveal His work and join it.
- D. We can't escape this anyway. As people know that we are followers of Jesus, they will have expectations of us.

To be missional people we need to claim these realities and commit our relationships to God's purposes. This is best done in partnership with others who share about relationships in prayer over time. We will see growth in our relationships as we share stories of changes in our relationships.

ACNews
1001 Arthur Ave.
Scottdale, PA 15683
ph. (724) 887-0273
e-mail: 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
www.amc-mcusa.org

Conference Calendar ▼

March 5

Spring Delegate Session at Maple Grove, Belleville

March 11-13

Junior High Retreat, Laurelville

April 16

Tri-State Relief Sale Workday at Springs 9am-3pm.

April 15

Evening Concert at PMC for Eastern Mennonite Missions

April 16

Tri-State Relief Work Day Springs Mennonite Church

May 7

Big Valley Bike/Hike for Tri-State Relief Sale. 9am - 12 noon at Maple Grove, Belleville

May 13-15

Camporee, ages 8-12 Pine Springs Camp, Jennerstown

May 15

Tri-state Music Fundraiser Kaufman MC, Davidsville

May 23-26

Minister's Spring Seminar, Speaker: Doug Miller

July 15-16

Tri-State Relief Sale McHenry, MD

August 5-7

Annual AMC Conference Laurelville

Becoming Missional — in All We Do



**A “Missional Christmas Tree,”
created by members of
Maple Grove Mennonite Church
in Belleville, PA**

The Maple Grove Mennonite Church, like many congregations, has been asking what it might mean or look like if we began putting the word “missional” in front of everything we did and had. What might it mean to have a missional worship service, a missional fellowship hall, a missional leadership meeting, a missional . . . you get the point. We are learning as we go.

One recent, positive experience was to apply this to the Christmas tree we had in our foyer. One Sunday School class took responsibility for this year’s tree and transformed it into a missional Christmas tree. What they did was to purchase some infant socks (which were later donated to a local organization) and inserted either \$5, \$10, or \$20 in each sock. (It was estimated that \$400-\$500 was

used for the project.) Households from the church were encouraged to take one of the stockings and use the money to spread the love of Jesus to somebody over the Christmas season. There was also a paper in each stocking for us to return to the tree with a summary of how the money was used.

On Sunday evening, January 23, there was a service to share some of what people had experienced. When we arrived, we were given a paper that had the results of the project. We also listened to “the rest of the stories,” as people shared more than what was on the paper. We heard stories of people giving more than what was in the stocking. We heard stories of people struggling to find the perfect recipient of the gift. We heard stories of people being blessed far more than blessing others and experiencing God’s love as they shared it. We heard stories of people being emotionally touched at how God led and moved.

One such story that typifies this came from a young adult, who struggled to know who to give her gift to and when, but Christmas was approaching quickly. As she was leaving a restaurant, she noticed a man she sensed as “the one.” She went over and offered to pay his bill. This resulted in an extended conversation. It turns out that the man was grieving the recent loss of a family member. It became a moment for ministry in the name of Jesus’ love that likely would have been missed otherwise.

Our evening together was energizing and concluded with ideas of how we can continue to encourage one another to be involved in the lives of those we encounter in similar kinds of ways. We have been challenged to continue to put missional in front of everything we do and have, even something as routine as a Christmas tree.

—Alan Kauffman, Maple Grove