



**Allegheeny Mennonite
Conference**

A conference of Mennonite Church USA



AMC NEWS

APRIL-MAY 2012

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS THEME OF SPRING GATHERING

Allegheeny Conference delegates met on Saturday, March 31, for the Spring Faith and Life Gathering at Crossroads Community Church near Johnstown, Pa. The group was led into the day of worshipful work by singing with a worship team from Crossroads.



Julie Harris, a former missionary to Japan with the Christian Missionary Alliance, led in a devotional time. She has been assisting with the preaching ministry at Crossroads during their interim period.

Emphasizing that God's ways are beyond our understanding, Julie offered a visual example of God's plan using the art of Origami. Two very different papers, though the same size and shape in the beginning, became two different objects through several stages including the "dreaded squash fold". She encouraged the group to rest in the hands of God, the Master Designer, as He forms us for His plan.

Nurturing relationships and reconciliation were major themes of the day as Moderator John Bender, on behalf of the Leadership Council, shared a summary of their time of discernment during their work retreat in February. The AMC relationship with Hyattsville Mennonite Church was a central area identified in the thoughts on reconciliation. The Leadership Council presented a summary statement indicating their commitment to working toward reconciliation, to helping each congregation fulfill its missional calling in its local context, to expressing the unity of the body of Christ, and to helping AMC clarify its identity and vision.

Other items of the day included the election of several persons presented by the Nominating Committee for open positions on the Leadership Council. Cathy Spory will become the Moderator-Elect, Wayne Yoder was elected as Casselman Regional Representative, and Chris Lehman was chosen as the Johnstown Regional Representative. Elections for open positions on the Nominating Committee were Bill Brubaker for the Johnstown Region and Nancy Kaufman for the Eastern Region. Other appointments made by the Leadership Council were also noted by the Moderator.

Discussions of the 2012-2013 Budget, including plans for renovations and the possible sale of the conference office building in

Somerset, were led by Ken Litwiller, Treasurer, and John Bender. Ken challenged congregations to tithe their offerings to AMC as AMC tithes to Mennonite Church USA.

There were several opportunities during the day for personal interaction including during the noon mealtime while enjoying a delicious meal prepared by several conference youth groups as a fundraiser for Phoenix 2013.

Conference youth minister, Joy Cotchen, reported on youth activities as well as information on the upcoming convention in Phoenix. Donna Mast, conference minister, shared an update on communication within the conference via the website as well as several upcoming educational events.

Missional Leader, Lawrence Brenneman, ended the day's session on a note of mission—joining God in what God is doing around us. Stories were shared of missional activities in several areas including the Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Pittsburgh.

Denominational Minister, Nancy Kauffman, was a guest of the conference for the day and expressed her appreciation for the hospitality, humor, honesty, humility, and open hands as we came before God as churches joined together in Allegheeny Mennonite Conference.

MEGHAN GOOD DELIGHTS *WOMEN IN CONVERSATION*

Meghan Good served as keynote speaker for the biennial Women in Conversation retreats hosted by Mennonite Women USA and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center this April.

Good, pastor at Albany Mennonite Church (Albany, Ore.), centered her four presentations on the Old Testament book of Hosea. Her grasp of theological concepts and ability to tell engaging stories captivated the 200 plus women in attendance at Laurelville (Mount Pleasant, Pa.) and Cross Wind Retreat Center (Hesston, Ks.).



Joyce Hall of University Mennonite Church, has attended four Women in Conversation retreats. She says, "Each time I have felt enriched, spiritually uplifted, relaxed and refreshed, ready to carry over what I've gained into my daily life. I value the friendships and contacts that have been made at these retreats, especially with my Allegheny Mennonite Conference sisters. This year I really enjoyed the speaker, Meghan Good, and her message conveying that we are God's beloved. Her words gave me much to ponder and apply to my life. I hope even more AMC women will take part and be blessed by the next Women in Conversation Retreat."

Thoughtfully planned worship sessions complemented Good's messages at both retreats: Carmen Miller collaborated with Janet Hostetter and several other women from Harrisonburg Mennonite Church (Harrisonburg, Va.) to lead worship at Laurelville

In addition to worship sessions and input from Good, both retreats featured time set aside for women to participate in conversation circles. Assigned to these small groups on the opening night, women were encouraged to reflect on questions presented by Good and share from their own life experiences during the weekend.

"The weekend was a real blessing to me," said Lauren Brown of Stahl Mennonite Church. "I very much appreciated the time spent in conversation circles. People's willingness to share honestly reminded me that I am not alone and reinforced that God is ever present and moving in our lives."

Participants also enjoyed ample free time to spend together or in solitude as well as a variety of optional activities designed to nourish mind, body, soul and spirit. In what is becoming a favorite at Women in Conversation, Saturday afternoon's MennoSpa offered participants chair massages, chocolate tasting and other relaxing activities.

As a newcomer to the retreat, Sarecia Powers of Pinto Mennonite Church had this response. "Women In Conversation was a very fulfilling weekend on many levels. The music was so inspirational and uplifting. Life sometimes wears you down and our speaker reminded me how purposefully and passionately God is pursuing me each and every day no matter what I am facing. The MennoSpa was so physically relaxing. It was so nice to get away with my small group sisters for some fellowship and worship time. The weekend really inspired and refreshed me. Special thanks for the Mennonite Women USA scholarship toward my attendance at this retreat."

Women in Conversation will return to Laurelville and Hesston in spring 2014; dates and speaker information are yet to be announced. (Adapted from news release provided by Mennonite Women USA and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center)

TWO GOSHEN GRADS FROM CONFERENCE

GOSHEN, Ind. — Two Allegheny Conference natives are among the 233 candidates who received diplomas at Goshen College's 114th Annual Commencement on April 22.

Alisha Marie Handrich Bender, daughter of John and Marilyn Bender of Pittsburgh, will receive a bachelor's degree with a major in elementary education/special education and a minor in music. She is a 2008 graduate of Pittsburgh High School for the Creative Performing Arts and attends Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

Adam Zachary Rice, son of Jim Rice and Dawn Longenecker of Mount Rainier, will receive a bachelor's degree with a major in sociology. He is a 2006 graduate of Edmund Burke School and attends Hyattsville Mennonite Church.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND...

The Celebration of Congregations and Conference

**August 3-5
At Laurelville**

***"The Greatest of These
is Love"*
I Corinthians 13**

**Speaker:
Loren Johns**

*See the website or contact your
pastor or the conference office
for registration information*

HESSTON COLLEGE ANNOUNCE HONORS

HESSTON, Kan. – Hesston College announced the names of full-time students whose spring semester grades earned them a place on the Dean's List (3.90 to 4.00) and Honor Roll (3.50 to 3.89).

Krista Rittenhouse of Mount Pleasant was named to the Dean's List. A sophomore and a recent graduate, she attends Scottdale Mennonite Church and is the daughter of Jane Birky Rittenhouse.

Isaac Tice of Salisbury was named to the Honor Roll. A sophomore and recent graduate, he attends Springs Mennonite Church and is the son of Enos and Carolyn Tice.

KRISTA RITTENHOUSE COMMISSIONED FOR SERVICE

HESSTON, Kan. – During Hesston College chapel Monday, April 23, 48 students were commissioned for Christian ministry and service during the summer. The students will serve around the world in positions from camp counselor to supervisors at disaster sites.

Among them was Krista Rittenhouse of Mt. Pleasant, Pa. who will serve with Mennonite Disaster Service in Birmingham, Ala., and with MDS's youth group program at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in Divide, Colo. She is the daughter of Jane Birky Rittenhouse and attends Scottdale Mennonite Church.

"These students are going to make a difference in someone's life because they are willing to join with and participate in Jesus' ministry that is already taking place in all of these different settings," said Todd Lehman, Hesston College campus pastor

YOUTH CABINET MEETS/VOLUNTEERS AT IGH

The Allegheny Conference Youth Cabinet held their meeting at International Guest House in Washington, DC, on April 21-22. We did an afternoon of working at the Guest House, then took the bus down to the Memorials to do some sight-seeing. Our meeting was then held in the evening. Sunday morning, we worshiped with Hyattsville Mennonite Church.

The photos were taken during the work project by IGH host, Andy Stoner. As you encounter these young people in your churches, ask them about this experience and encourage them in their work for the conference youth program.

contributed by Joy Cotchen, Conference Youth Minister

Youth Cabinet members: (Back row, l. to r.) Grace Weaver, Trever Schrock, Brian Charles, Brianna Flowers. (Front row l. to r.) Tyler Schrock, Tom Teneffoss, Naomi Teneffoss, John Teneffoss, Joy Cotchen. (Not pictured members of cabinet who were unable to attend: Abigail Cable and Kristen Kaltreider.)



(See more photos of the youth cabinet in action on the conference website, www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org)

SPRINGS DEDICATES MCC GIFTS

The Daughters of Dorcas sewing group of Springs Mennonite Church, meeting weekly since 1915, has been working year-long to sew comforters and prepare kits to be sent to Mennonite Central Committee.

The most recent shipment on April 24 consisted of material created since October 2011. This included 480 hygiene kits, 65 comforters, 48 crocheted caps for AIDS kits, 20 knit caps for infant care kits, 20 infant care kits and 105 relief kits. A dedication ceremony was held during worship service on April 22.

Harriet Berg



Grace Hershberger age 93 (on left) and Edith Romesburg age 97 sit by one of the many comforters they have prepared to be sent to MCC.

Darlene Miller on left, Susan Wadel of MCC on right. Boxes dedicated on April 22.



CONGREGATIONS PREPARE FOR TRI-STATE FESTIVAL

Scottdale Mennonite Church has received a playhouse destined for the TriState Relief Sale. Pictured are Paul and Carol Miller from Berlin, Ohio, who brought it to the church so that it can be displayed for a period of time in town.

Maynard Brubacher, from the church, brought a lift to help unload the house into position on the sidewalk near the church. This will be the second time that Scottdale Mennonite has provided such an item for auction at the relief sale. Last year, a similar house was sold at auction for \$1900.



A dedication of quilt and needlework projects for MCC was a part of the morning worship service at Pinto Mennonite Church on May 27. Six large comforters and four baby comforters as well as a variety of smaller items including table toppers, wall quilts, and

pillows were contributed. Several MCC work nights were held including one in which the Venture Club (children grades 3-8) were given opportunity to help complete the tying of the comforters.

A portion of the litany of dedication written by Roveen Yoder and read during the Pinto worship service expresses well the motivation behind these contributions. *"We dedicate these quilts to your service, trusting that your love will go wherever each one is sent, making it more than just a piece of material but making it an expression of love."*

TriState Relief Sale is scheduled for July 20-21 at the McHenry County Fairgrounds in McHenry, Md. This two-day event is a sale and auction of hand-crafted items from the Mennonite communities of southwestern Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. Proceeds from the sale go to relief work around the world through Mennonite Central Committee.

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All Allegheny Mennonite Conference news releases are now being posted online at www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org. Since many in our congregations do not have access to the internet, a selection of these articles will periodically be compiled in a printable format. If you have questions or concerns please contact the conference office or news editor.

CONFERENCE STUDENTS RECEIVE HONORS AT GOSHEN COLLEGE

GOSHEN, Ind. — Goshen College recently recognized 239 students, for excellence in academics, including five Allegheny Conference students, on the 2011-12 spring semester Dean's List.

Melina A. Hunsberger, daughter of Daniel and Mariela Hunsberger of Hollsopple, is a senior studying elementary education/special education. She is a 2007 graduate of Johnstown Christian School and attends Kaufman Mennonite Church.

Annika Ruth Miller, daughter of Merrill and Cindy Miller, former Scottdale residents now living in Broadway, Va., is a senior studying elementary education. She is a 2009 graduate of Southmoreland Senior High School and attends Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Abraham Edward Stucky, son of Max and Lynda Stucky of Moon Township, is a senior studying physics and art. He is a 2009 graduate of Moon Senior High School and attends Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

Brody Austin Thomas, son of Kenneth and Amy Jo Thomas of Springs, is a sophomore studying music. He is a graduate of Salisbury-Elk Lick High School and attends Springs Mennonite Church.

Jacob Daniel Smucker, son of Jeffrey and Faith Smucker of Woodward, is a freshman studying music. He is a 2010 graduate of Penns Valley Area Junior-Senior High School and attends University Mennonite Church.