



**Allegheny Mennonite
Conference**

A conference of Mennonite Church USA



AMC NEWS

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2012

DIFFERENT GIFTS, DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, ONE BODY

Johnstown Region Churches Worship with Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Pittsburgh



On March 11, 2012, twenty-six people from the Johnstown Region Mennonite churches and two people from Scottdale Mennonite church attended a worship service with the Bhutanese-Nepali church of Pittsburgh.

After a worship service at Stahl Mennonite church, we loaded up the four vehicles and headed towards Pittsburgh. We all chose different roads in which to travel but we all arrived safely at the church in Pittsburgh at the same time. This is a lesson from God that we all travel different paths in life as Christians, but we have one goal in mind: to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Bob Brown, pastor at Stahl Mennonite, gave the sermon in English and Ser Darji translated it in Nepali. The sermon focused on Paul the apostle's letter to the Corinthians, which encouraged the believers in Corinth to remember we all have different gifts but are serving God with One Spirit as the body of Christ. It was a wonderful experience being able to worship and pray together with different voices and languages, knowing that God understands and connects us with one another.

After the service, we were welcomed with a Bhutanese-Nepali meal. We enjoyed food and fellowship as one body of believers in Jesus Christ.

By Ruth Ann Allison (New Life) and Lauren Brown (Stahl)



Dale Miller from Scottdale Mennonite played the accordion as everyone prepared for worship. Anita and Leela, women from the Bhutanese-Nepali church, led the worship, prayer time, and singing in the Nepali language.

The first song, "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God," was a familiar song with a different arrangement, as it was accompanied by drumming and clapping. The word "Alleluia" is the same in any language.



Tina Lehman from Stahl Mennonite led the Johnstown Region in sharing two songs with the Bhutanese-Nepali community – "Amazing Grace" and "Jesus Loves Me."



CHANGES AT CORNERSTONE FELLOWSHIP

Steven Olivieri was installed as pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship of Mill Run on Sunday, January 8, 2012. He had previously been licensed as pastor, and had been working with Jeff Jones, who was the lead pastor. January 8 marked the end of Pastor Jeff Jones's ministry and the beginning of Pastor Steven Olivieri's time as he assumes the full load of pastoral ministry at Cornerstone.

Pastor Jeff served as worship leader for the morning. Numerous people read scripture, chosen specifically for Steve, throughout the service. Many of these persons also spoke words of encouragement to Steve and to the congregation. Times of scripture reading were interspersed with heartfelt congregational songs of praise and adoration to God.

Shawn Shirk, friend of Steve, brought the morning's message. He spoke of God's call to ministry upon Steve's life, and brought a helpful reminder that God does and will continue to guide those called to lead God's people.

Pastor Jeff led in the installation service. At the end, Pastor Steve acknowledged the reality he was feeling of heavy responsibility which now is placed upon his shoulders. He also spoke with great gratitude for Jeff's mentoring of him, begun when Steve was still in high school. Jeff didn't give up on Steve, even during those times when Steve was walking away from a future of pastoral ministry. Steve said that it is because of Jeff's involvement in his life that he is a pastor today. He then surprised Jeff with a gift and basket of cards, marking Jeff's retirement.

After a final hymn and benediction, the congregation gathered in the basement to share a meal and time of fellowship on this day of celebration before heading home.



-Donna Mast

HESSTON COLLEGE ANNOUNCES ACADEMIC HONORS

HESSTON, Kan. – Hesston College announced the names of full-time students whose fall semester grades earned them a place on the Dean's List (3.90 to 4.00) and Honor Roll (3.50 to 3.89). Three Allegheny Conference students have qualified for these honors.

Freshman Taylor Fritz was named to the Dean's List. He is

the son of Tim and Carolyn Fritz and a member of Maple Grove Mennonite.

Sophomore Krista Rittenhouse was named to the Dean's List. She is the daughter of Jane Birky Rittenhouse and a member of Scottdale Mennonite.

Sophomore Isaac Tice was named to the Honor Roll. He is the son of Enos and Carolyn Tice and a member of Springs Mennonite Church.

STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

GOSHEN, Ind. — Goshen College recently recognized 215 students, including four Allegheny Conference students, for excellence in academics, on the 2011-12 fall semester Dean's List.

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

Annika Ruth Miller, daughter of Merrill and Cindy Miller, former Scottdale residents now living in Broadway, Va., is a junior studying elementary education. She attended Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Jacob Daniel Smucker, son of Jeffrey and Faith Smucker of Woodward, is a freshman studying music. He attends University Mennonite Church.

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

SPRING FAITH AND LIFE GATHERING

Saturday, March 31
Crossroads
Community Church
Johnstown, PA

Note: With the closing of the Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale, PA, Allegheny Mennonite Conference has made the decision to discontinue the publication and distribution of AC News, their bi-monthly newsletter. All News Releases are now being put online at www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org. Since many in our congregations do not have access to the internet we have decided to compile these articles periodically and print them for the convenience of our members. If you have questions or concerns contact your pastor or the office of Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

RESOURCE ADVOCATES VOLUNTEER TIME

HARRISONBURG, Va.—

Connecting Mennonite congregations with their denominational resources is hard work. They are diverse and spread out geographically.



That is where a group called “resource advocates” comes in.

For Mennonite Church USA, the resource advocates are appointed by area conferences.

Resource advocates are volunteers who connect local congregations and church members with resources available from the agencies of Mennonite Church USA. They serve as contacts for information and questions in 20 area conferences, strengthening the congregations’ Mennonite theology and creating a sense of unity.

Each year the resource advocates join agency representatives for a weekend of training on new materials and programming. This year the event was at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Va., Feb. 3-5.

Since many of the advocates serve for several years, the weekend is a good way to connect with each other, along with having a bit of fun. Two of the advocates are sisters—Cathy Spory of Allegheny Conference and Carol Holsopple Froese of Mountain States Conference. They use the event as an excuse to do some catching up while staying connected to the work of the Mennonite Church.

By serving their local communities and conferences, resource advocates advance the mission of the church and help congregations live out their Christian faith in new and relevant ways. *Michael Spory*

KMC SHARES MIRACULOUS MOUNTAIN OF FABRIC

It all happened by chance—or was it? Sometimes we try to explain away the little miracles of life. The following story is a small miracle that became a mountain of fabric to share with others.

Instead of lightning bolts, the Kaufman Mennonite Church’s Women in Mission group had bolts of fabric descend upon them. As these ladies are constantly creating comforts and kit bags for Mennonite Central Committee, they are always on the lookout for fabric that is useful and affordable. Through a series of coincidences they located a deal too good to pass up and were in possession of 8000 yards of 60 inch wide fabric for 40 cents a yard and just perfect for their needs. To the Kaufman Women in Missions this was a find better than gold. But quite a mountain to climb, store and process!

By word of mouth as well as contacting other charitable groups, we have been able to move half of the mountain of fabric already and we haven’t had it long. A fabric journal is being kept to “track” our fabric travels and charitable groups have donated 40 cents a yard to cover expenses. Good stewardship is being used as we share the climbing of our fabric mountain.

We see this as a miracle because God heard our plea for our needs and worked through many to weave this story. Each time we share our fabric, the story continues and the blessing reaches a little farther. *Norma Alwine*



CHURCHES RECEIVE MUTUAL AID GRANTS

GOSHEN, Ind. — Seventeen churches in Allegheny Conference received needed financial assistance last year to help people facing financial challenges as part of a grant program from Everence Financial.

In 2011, the Everence Sharing Fund program provided more than \$16,741 in matching grants to churches in the conference. Among the churches receiving grants were: Crossroads Community Church in Johnstown, PA; Scottdale Mennonite in Scottdale, PA; Kaufman Mennonite in Davidsville, PA; and Gortner Union Church in Oakland, MD.

The grants help members facing financial distress because of lost employment, medical bills or those struggling to pay for basic living expenses. The program also supports other church needs like community aid or service projects.

The Everence grants are funded primarily by members who own Everence products or use Everence Federal Credit Union banking services. Because of the organization’s unique tax status, money that would be paid in federal taxes instead is distributed through mutual aid — including the Sharing Fund.

In 2011, the Everence Sharing Fund gave more than \$924,000 in matching grants to 2,049 families across the country. Everence is a ministry of Mennonite Church USA and other churches. To learn more, visit Everence.com or call (800) 348-7468.

“WORSHIP, REST, LISTEN, LAUGH” THEME OF PASTORS’ RETREAT

“Praise the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised.” (1 Kings 8:56 NLT)



The planning group of Carrie Eikler, Bob Brown, and Donna Mast used the above theme and verse to welcome thirty-four pastors and spouses and several of their children to retreat at Laurelville on February 10-12.

Worship times on Friday evening and Sunday morning were led by Wayne and Roveen Yoder and focused on birds and their nests, connecting Wayne’s biology profession with the life of the congregation. Friday evening, he invited leaders to consider their congregation as their nest and explored the functions of a nest: to propagate, nurture, provide safety, and encourage fidelity.

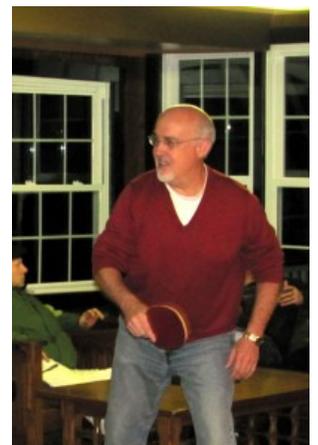
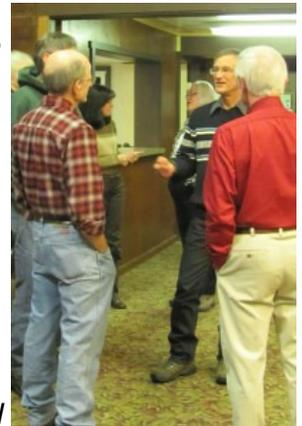
Sunday morning’s message centered on expanding the nest and included a communion service. Morning and evening prayers in the Celtic Christian tradition led by Carrie Eikler comprised the worship times on Saturday. Singing together was also an enjoyable and meaningful part of the worship.

The sharing of individual faith journeys has been a highlight of previous retreats and was again an inspiring part of this weekend. Stories were shared by Merle and Evie Christner, Carl and Sheri Geissing, and Joe and Linda Furry. As a newcomer to the conference, Marv Friesen, pastor of University Mennonite Church, offered these reflections.

“One of the most profound aspects of the weekend gathering was the sharing of personal faith journeys by 3 pastors and spouses. I found that as I listened and heard the ways in which God’s Spirit entered into their lives, I was reminded anew of how God’s Spirit nudged and prodded in our own journey. I greatly appreciated the time spent in reflecting together on the joys and challenges of ministry. While each of us have encountered unique experiences, there is a common thread that links us together as we strive to serve our communities in faithful ways.”

A “break-out” session led by John and Marilyn Bender was offered on Saturday for pastors and spouses to gather separately and discuss their unique roles within their families and as ministers in the congregation. Other opportunities for playing in the snow, playing games, visiting, reading, resting, and yes, laughing, were plentiful.

Mel Schmidt, retired pastor from Hyattsville, offers this encouragement for pastors to take advantage of this weekend of refreshment in future years. “I thoroughly enjoyed the pastor’s retreat, listening to the “story” of how God has led various persons into the ministry. Each story is unique with its own powerful moving of the Spirit in very unique ways for each individual who shared. The ample “free time” was put to good use, giving all of us the opportunity to get into conversations “one on one” with our colleagues in the ministry. Through these personal encounters there were a lot of experiences shared and support given. Since my retirement in 2003 I have not attended these retreats because of other commitments. I do intend to keep my calendar clear so that Charlotte and I can share this experience in the future. I am grateful to the Allegheny Conference for providing this experience without cost to those who can attend this event.”



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