



**Allegheny Mennonite
Conference**

A conference of Mennonite Church USA



AMC NEWS

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2013

MORGANTOWN CHURCH HOSTS SPRING FAITH & LIFE GATHERING

Allegheny Conference Delegates met at Morgantown Church of the Brethren on March 2 for the Spring Faith and Life Gathering. This was a business session with several important agenda items, but Donna Mast, Conference Minister, also offered this statement. "Here we also worship, discuss, eat, pray, laugh, and cry together. Here we can hear the voice of God's Spirit for our future as a conference. Through all these activities we discern together what it means to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in our part of God's Kingdom".



The afternoon session took place around tables in which everyone was invited to participate in discussion of the purpose statement of the Reconciliation Discernment Committee presented by the Leadership Council. Delegates wrote on notecards and voiced their fears and their hopes for such a committee as well as the positives and negatives of the purpose statement. These will provide much input for the Leadership Council as they discern the next steps in moving toward possible reconciliation of Hyattsville Mennonite Church and Allegheny Mennonite Conference.

The next conference-wide gathering will be a "whole family event", the Celebration of Conference and Congregations, scheduled at Laurelville on August 2-4.



The day began with food and fellowship then proceeded to worship and laughter as Morgantown COB led the group. The songs and meditation focused on being one in Christ Jesus despite our differences and included a "sports metaphor" skit featuring

the fans of West Virginia, Pittsburgh, and Maryland.

Business sessions focused on affirmation of new leaders, consideration of new requirements for being credentialed in AMC, reporting of various appointments and upcoming events, financial discussions, and acceptance the budget for 2013-2014. Three persons were presented by the nominating committee and were affirmed to the following positions on the Leadership Council: Carrie Eikler as the Western Regional Representative, Ken Litwiller as Treasurer, and Karen Howard as a member of the CLC (Constituency Leadership Council for Mennonite Church USA). Enos Tice was elected by the delegates to serve on the Nominating Committee for the Casselman Valley Region.

"Flat AI", an idea taken from the children's book "Flat Stanley" and adapted by several other conferences, was introduced as an incentive for congregations to share the happenings in their church with the entire conference.



Moderator J. Lorne Peachey, Moderator-elect Cathy Spory, and Conference Minister Donna Mast with "Flat AI"

WES YODER JOINS PASTORAL TEAM AT KAUFMAN MC

Choosing to follow Jesus can require hard choices. Wes Yoder answered a call to make a job transition in life and become part of the Pastoral Team at Kaufman Mennonite Church. On Sunday, February 10, 2013, we celebrated that decision with a licensing service as part of our morning worship service. Wes joins the Pastoral Team of Keith Yoder, Ben Miller and Dan Hunsberger.



Former Pastor Don Hamsher, who is now lead pastor at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church in Sugarcreek, Ohio, was present to bring the morning message. "Coming Together" was the title of Don's thoughts. He related that to how prayers over the years, people's obedience and Wes' decisions have all come together as part of God's plan for Kaufman Church. Wes was instructed to love Jesus first and then to love people. The congregation was told to give our leaders freedom and to share our lives with each other, thus finding strength in the Body. Don shared that if all of us accept responsibility, focus on the important things and forget the little irritations, the power of God will explode in our lives and community.

Donna Mast, Allegheny Conference Minister, led the licensing promises. She explained the licensing period as a time of service and a process of discernment, possibly moving toward ordination. The Congregation was reminded that all who choose to follow Jesus are called to ministry.

Marcia Yoder

FLAT AL VISITS HONDURAS



Flat Al, Jr. took a long trip to the mountains of Honduras during the second week of March. He met some very curious friends from the Indian Village of Tribu while on a Medical Mission Trip with Grace the Americas (Propapa). Others traveling with Flat Al, Jr. were Julie Chaves, Martha Miller and Norma Alwine from Kaufman Mennonite and Carl Yoder, brigade leader, from Thomas Mennonite.

Go to
www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org for more Flat Al photos.

PASTORS "CALLED" TO RETREAT

The annual Allegheny Mennonite Conference Retreat was enjoyed by 28 pastors, spouses, and children as they gathered at Laurelville on March 8-9. A gift from the conference to pastors, the weekend was restful, worshipful, and meaningful.

Mark and Susan Peachey from Scottdale Mennonite Church gave leadership to the contemplative and experiential worship times using scripture from Isaiah 6. Laurie Yoder led the group in singing for several of the sessions as the participants meditated on being common and unclean, called, committed, and sent.

A much-appreciated part of the weekend was hearing the spiritual journeys of three of the pastors in our conference, Ron Spory, Marv Friesen, and Eric Haglund. This is the fourth year this kind of sharing has occurred and continues to be very meaningful for all those who listen as well as those who speak.

Ample time was given to visit, nap, read, hike, play games, enjoy good food, and just relax on the beautiful campus of Laurelville. Several persons spoke of the importance of pastors being given the opportunity to network with and relate to each other in this setting. Pastor's spouses were also able to share with each other about their special position within the congregation.

Those who have been making this weekend a priority on their calendar as well as several "first-timers" enthusiastically said that they would make plans to return next year. Thank you, AMC, for this opportunity!



Retreat speakers, Mark and Susan Peachey



Flat Al joined in the fun!



Wandering in the Desert: A Church's Journey to Fulfill Its Mission

"So let us fling the church doors wide open to welcome all who have cares to unburden, thanks to express, hopes to nurture! Fling the church doors wide open so that all who enter will find the doorway to a richer and more meaningful life!"



Completed exterior rebuild-the new wall of glass – photo credit Jake Short

With these words, the worship leader exuberantly began the Service of Dedication at Hyattsville (MD) Mennonite Church on Sunday, January 27, to celebrate the congregation's joyful return to its newly renovated church building, the first major re-building since its original construction in 1958. A Litany of Dedication expressed joy and gratitude for the faithfulness of many people and the grace of God. Praise and thanks were given to the congregation founders who had a vision for the church. The congregation sang a hymn written for the occasion by former associate pastor Adam Tice: "O God, ...unbounded by our building, but living with us still, teach us to use this dwelling to seek and do your will."

In the early 2000's, two young men with severe developmental disabilities began attending HMC. Charlie and Andre, clients of Jubilee Association of Maryland, a outreach ministry of HMC, were unable to fully participate in congregational life as there was no way to get their wheelchairs to the fellowship hall on the ground floor. The limited access to much of the old building was a painful reminder of how one ministry of high importance to the congregation – hospitality – remained unfulfilled.

Hospitality has been an integral piece of Hyattsville's mission statement since 1990. The ensuing two decades saw several building committees formed, architect plans rejected, and modest fund raising for sanctuary upgrades. These are now appreciated as important steps – at times painful and discouraging, but providing valuable lessons – along an extended journey of waiting and exploration. In 2008, with renewed motivation and purpose, a new building committee and a fundraising committee were formed to launch the "Open Door" campaign to lead the re-build.



Andre Delaney and counselor Nate Hajdu (of Jubilee Assoc of Maryland) lead the procession to the elevator ribbon cutting and fellowship meal after the dedication service – photo credit Markus Krisetya



HMC members gather prior to the dedication service to celebrate the new church rebuild project – photo credit Markus Krisetya

"The building is now more of an embodiment of who we are", noted David Conrad, chair of the building committee. "The re-build gives the space a graciousness it did not have before." The building entrance has been transformed from a brick façade with a small

entrance and narrow foyer into a more inviting wall of glass which lets natural light bathe a large single gathering/greeting space to welcome members and visitors. A second glass wall in the foyer allows that light into the sanctuary. "I don't think I will be able to sing a hymn about light in the same way again," shared Leanne Zook during the service. For the first time in the building's history, an elevator will provide access to the fellowship hall on the ground floor level. Updated and

enlarged restrooms with showers will improve hosting for the local "Warm Nights" program for the homeless and for other groups visiting the Washington D.C. area.

The celebration was bittersweet with the news that Charlie died the day before the dedication after a brief illness. He couldn't speak, but everyone appreciated his whistles, deep laughs, and clapping during worship. His presence each Sunday provided one of the strongest motivations for the renovation – a building which now more fully welcomes all, regardless of ability, who come through the door. In her sermon, Pastor Cindy Lapp described Charlie as "our Moses", who led all of us to the transformed and still sacred space. "God, guide us and let us serve you as a Christ-centered community committed to your justice and peace, your beauty and hospitality." (from the Litany of Dedication)

-Peter Goering

SNOW CAMP EXPERIENCE “FANTASTIC”

Theme this year: “Brand New Dust”

Snokamp is an event planned for Allegheny Conference youth in grades 9-12 by the Youth Cabinet. This year it was held on February 1-3 at Laurelville. The sixty-seven youth and sponsors in attendance focused on the theme of “Brand New Dust” using the scripture reference, 2 Cor. 5:16-17. The speaker shared her own faith story. Through all the difficulties she faced, she remained faithful to God and God remained faithful to her. She reminded us that God is making a brand new creation out of us, if we just allow Christ to be the example we live by.



Joy Cotchen, Conference Youth Minister, gives a blessing to seniors, Brianna Flowers and Trever Schrock.

The speaker for the weekend was Hallie Cable. Hallie graduated from Hesston College with a youth ministry degree and is currently living in Philippi, West Virginia, where she and her husband serve as the Service Adventure leaders.

The worship leaders were: Alyssa Cable, Grace Weaver, Brody Thomas, John Teneffoss and Joe Furry. Alyssa is a student at EMU, Grace and Brody study at Goshen College, John is a student at Delaware Technical Institute and Joe is the pastor of Martinsburg Mennonite Church.

Grace Weaver said, “It was definitely a lot of fun for me to get to come back to Snokamp as a college rep and worship leader. I loved Snokamp as a youth participant, so it was great to be able to come back and (hopefully) help everyone else to have as great of an experience as

I did! It was a little strange to realize that there were a lot of new people I didn’t know, but the atmosphere and love of worship was exactly the same and just what I needed.”

In addition to the worship sessions, the weekend included workshops, group games, free time, and a special concert by “The Walking Roots Band.” As always, good food, fun, and fellowship with new and old friends completed the experience.

Aaron Dunmore, Cabinet member and upcoming Cabinet Co-Chair had this to say about the weekend. “I felt like this year’s Snokamp was fantastic. The group had a great vibe, and I think everyone enjoyed it a lot. I can’t wait until next year!”

NEWS BRIEFS.... (More information found at www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org)

- ◆ Big Valley Bike, Bike, and Hike to Benefit Tri-State Sale. May 4, 2013 New this year: Motorcycle Ride. For more information, contact Alan or Nancy Kauffman at (717) 935-9965 or Maple Grove Mennonite Church at (717) 935-2513 or by email at ank@pa.net.
- ◆ The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will be leading a Mediation Skills Training Institute at First English Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ohio during the week of May 6-10, 2013.
- ◆ Please take note and change the date on your calendar for the Sister Care seminar sponsored by Allegheny Mennonite Conference at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, PA. The new dates are October 25-26, 2013.

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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, these articles will periodically be compiled in a printable format. If you have questions or concerns please contact the conference office or news editor.