



Allegheny Mennonite
Conference

A conference of Mennonite Church USA



AMC NEWS

JUNE-JULY 2012

HEILSGESCHICHTE (SALVATION HISTORY) SUBJECT OF SPRING SEMINAR

Twenty-four credentialed members of Allegheny Mennonite Conference gathered at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center from May 14-17 to participate in classes led by Marion Bontrager. The topic was Heilsgeschichte or Salvation History. This is the central organizing theme of Hesston College's course called Biblical Literature that has been developed over the past 30 years under Marion's leadership. This course is highly appreciated at Hesston. Several of the pastors who were in attendance had already taken this course, but returning to the topic was welcomed by them.

"I am grateful to Marion Bontrager for spending four days with pastors from across Allegheny Mennonite Conference," stated Donna Mast, Conference Minister. "He has touched the lives of hundreds of Hesston students as they've studied the history of God's salvation story. We were given a glimpse of the richness of this study that Marion has developed over the years. Our morning meditation times were made very meaningful as several pastors shared their personal stories of salvation, connecting to the broader story."

"Marion made a number of points which are important for all of us who aim to live from the Bible," observed Daniel Hertzler. "The Bible is a story. It is our story. To keep it in focus we need a few "pegs", a point he illustrated at the beginning by attempting to hang his cap where there were no pegs. For me it was a good reminder that without some historical understanding the Bible can be confusing, especially since in preaching and teaching we generally take it in small sections."



Marion Bontrager leads study of the Biblical story. (photo by Conrad Mast)



This year, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center graciously allowed the group to move from the cottages, where this event has typically been held, to the Lodge, giving space to move around the tables and more easily relax during free times. Attendees overwhelmingly stated that this was a great move and hope that the Lodge will be the venue for the Spring Seminar in the years ahead.

Keith Yoder, pastor at Kaufman Mennonite Church reflected, "I thoroughly enjoyed the Pastor's week at Laurelville. It was great to have Marion Bontrager lead our study. He brings such insight and wisdom to the table. I enjoyed studying the Bible (Heilsgeschichte) in a missional

way which focused on God's life-changing plan for his people."

Spring Seminar is an annual event. Next year it will be held April 29-May 2, 2013. Duane Yoder, pastor at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va., will be teaching from the Gospel of John. "It is a great time for pastors to be resourced, refreshed, and to be reconnected to other pastors across Allegheny Mennonite Conference. I hope that even more pastors will be able to attend next year's Spring Seminar," Donna Mast encouraged.

IN THE NEWS....ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE STUDENTS

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 Scottsdale residents now living in Broadway, Va., is a senior studying elementary education. She is a 2009 graduate of Southmoreland Senior High School and attends Scottsdale 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.

GOSHEN, Ind. —

This summer, eight Goshen College students are exploring church ministry and gaining valuable experiences as they work with congregations across the United States through the college's **Ministry Inquiry Program (MIP)**.

Annika Miller, a junior elementary education major from Broadway, Va., is working at First Mennonite Church in Denver, Colo. Miller, daughter of Merrill and Cindy Miller, is a 2009 graduate of Southmoreland Senior High School, Scottsdale, Pa. She attends Scottsdale Mennonite Church.

The Ministry Inquiry Program is a joint effort of Mennonite Church USA and the five Mennonite colleges in the United States. The 24-year-old program enables students from Mennonite colleges to test their calling and gifts for ministry by serving as pastoral interns for a three-month term.

Elkhart, Ind.
(AMBS) —

Andrea Opel graduated May 26 with a Master of Divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Opel will continue studying at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich., to complete the Master of Social Work degree. She is a member of Glade Mennonite Church, Accident, Md., and her parents are Jeff and Rose Opel of Accident. She previously earned a B.A. from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Opel said, "I have appreciated being able to study both pastoral ministry and social work through the dual-degree program. This program has allowed me to explore many questions about my sense of call, and to integrate the two fields into one vocation of pastoral social work."



COMMUNITY YARD SALE SUPPORTS CHURCH PLANT

A Community Yard Sale was hosted by Stahl Mennonite Church Saturday, June 16th to support the Bhutanese Nepali Church of Pittsburgh. Donations were received from the Mennonite churches of the Johnstown region, and the Stahl community provided baked goods in addition to organizing the sale. The amount raised in support of the Bhutanese Nepali Church was \$753.66.

Garage sale goers were there bright and early to shop (shopping even before the sale was opened). Most items were sold as a "free will donation" — allowing customers to set the price and donate whatever amount they desired. Many shoppers were very excited to learn about the Bhutanese Nepali Church and as a result support their community.

Lauren Brown of Stahl Mennonite shared, "I am so overwhelmed by the generosity of people- both those who donated and shopped. My personal goal was to raise \$300-\$500. The sale's success is just another reminder that God is bigger than the boxes we sometimes put Him in."

The remainder of the unsold goods were then donated to local thrift stores — St. Francis Sharing and Caring Thrift Shop, Wiggles and Giggles, and World's Attic in support of their individual outreaches.

MEGHAN GOOD DELIGHTS WOMEN IN CONVERSATION ATTENDEES

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.).

Mennonite Women USA co-directors Rhoda Keener and Ruth Lapp Guengerich were pleased with the input Good provided. "Meghan Good's messages were a priceless gift to all who attended Women in Conversation," said Lapp Guengerich. "Her gift of biblical interpretation and insight will encourage women and men for years to come as we listen to her messages again and again."

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 In Conversation participants worship together
(photo by Brian Paff)*

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. For more information about the retreats and other Mennonite Women USA programs and initiatives, you can visit MennoniteWomenUSA.org or call 316.281.4396.

(Adapted from news release provided by Mennonite Women USA and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center)

MENNOMEDIA COMPLETES SONG SURVEY

Harrisonburg, Va.— In preparation for the next published Mennonite song collection, MennoMedia, the publishing agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, has recently completed a major song survey of congregations across North America.

Congregations participating from Allegheny Mennonite Conference were Pinto, Barrville, Morgantown Church of the Brethren, Scottdale, and Pittsburgh.

Originally commissioned by the Bi-National Worship Council, this survey will help to inform a committee appointed by MennoMedia and the denominations as they begin to shape the next Mennonite song collection

Begun in September 2011, the nine month survey was completed on May 1, 2012; however, churches had until June 1 to make their final submissions. In order to determine what songs Mennonites were already singing, congregations were asked to submit the songs they sang each week over the survey period, including music from special services and weekly events.

Over the course of the nine month survey, 191 total congregations submitted more than 32,000 song entries. These songs came from 118 different collections. Of those songs, almost 75 percent came from the current *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and its two supplements *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. Other collections frequently cited included Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), *Mennonite Hymnal* (1969), and *Sing and Rejoice!*, as well as a significant number of congregations that compile their own collections. Both MC USA and MC Canada had about 26 percent participation from their respective congregations, as well as five Mennonite education institutions from across the country.

Amy Gingerich, director of print media and co-chair of the Bi-National Worship Council, said that the committee envisioned this survey as the first step toward a new Mennonite song collection.

THOUSANDS CARED ABOUT HELPING OTHERS

The TriState Relief Sale, a benefit to help a hurting world through Mennonite Central Committee, resulted in one of its best years. With most activities in one large building, everybody could meet and greet their neighbor and keep abreast of the day's happenings.



Whether it was the great food, a surrey or barrel train ride, admiring classic vehicles or participating in an auction, the event proved most enjoyable for all. Bruce Campbell-Janz, MCC East Coast Director, welcomed everyone and thanked them for their part in making life a bit easier for others.

Penny Power is currently over \$20,000 and counting!

Harriet Berg



Allegheny Mennonite Conference Contact Information: PO Box 12 Somerset, PA 15501 Phone: 814-443-2007
Fax: 814-445-3418 Office Email: office@alleghenymennoniteconference.org
Conference Minister—Donna Mast--Email:donnam@alleghenymennoniteconference.org
Youth Minister—Joy Cotchen—Email:joyc@alleghenymennoniteconference.org
News and Information Editor--Evie Christner--Email:eviec@alleghenymennoniteconference.org

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.