



Allegheny Mennonite
Conference

A conference of Mennonite Church USA



AMC NEWS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2014

Faith and Life Gathering Explores RDC Recommendation

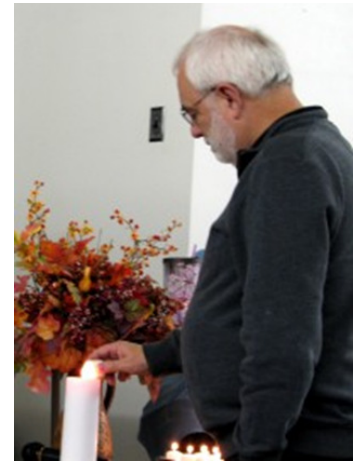
Nearly one hundred Allegheny Mennonite Conference delegates representing twenty-five churches met at Barrville Mennonite Church, Reedsville, PA, for the Fall 2014 Faith and Life Gathering on November 1. The day began with worship led by Carl Geissinger, Pastor at Barrville and the music worship band led by Sherri Geissinger. The devotions highlighted identity, confession, intercession, and surrender.

Much of the conversation during the day related to the Reconciliation Discernment Committee (RDC) and the recommendation formulated by that committee. Donna Mast, Conference Minister, emphasized that while this is very sobering work, it seemed that the RDC's arrival at a recommendation was Holy Spirit led. This recommendation is from the RDC to the Leadership Council, NOT from the Leadership Council to the delegates at this time. The recommendation was shared with delegates prior to the meeting. Members of the RDC were given time to explain how they came to this recommendation and delegates were able to ask them questions for clarification. There was time allotted for small discussion groups to meet and offer feedback to the Leadership Council. The Council will meet in January 2015 for further discussion with the intention of bringing their recommendation to the delegates at the March 2015 meeting.

The work sessions were led by AMC Moderator, Cathy Spory, and Moderator-elect, Marvin Friesen. They included the usual roll call, reading of the minutes, and finance report presented by Tim Mock. A pastoral credentialing team was introduced and affirmed by the delegates. This four-



person team will replace the four regional teams that have been in place since the new structure was implemented. Team members are Alan Kauffman of Maple Grove (Eastern region), Merle Christner of Pinto (Casselman region), Bob Brown of Stahl (Johnstown region), and Conrad Mast of Scottdale (Western region).



During Roll Call, a delegate from each congregation lit a candle from the Christ candle to represent the congregation.

Other changes include the filling of Carrie Eikler's seat on the Leadership Council which has been vacant since her move to Indiana, with John Davis of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church as the Western District Representative.

In her Conference Minister's report, Donna Mast noted that despite the tensions being felt by the Mennonite Church, Jesus is building God's church. She reported on the Bhutanese-Nepali Church's change in facilities and their plans for ministry as well as the licensing of Ben Wideman who was hired by University Mennonite Church to be the Anabaptist Campus Pastor at Penn State University.

(Continued on page 2)

(Fall Gathering-Continued)

Reports were given by Joy Cotchen, Conference Minister of Children and Youth and by Karen Howard regarding the most recent CLC (Constituency Leadership Council). In the afternoon, Joyce Hall also gave an update on Mennonite World Conference activities and how our conference may assist in various ways. An offering was lifted to assist the people of the Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Pittsburgh in attending Mennonite World Conference.

After a delicious lunch served by the Barrville church, Ken Sensenig, professional storyteller from MCC, wove stories of differences, reconciliation, and working together, focusing on the same goals while realizing that issues are complex. He stated that in our love for Christ and God and each other, with what divides us, we can walk together through grace. He reminded the group that in the Mennonite Church there is a long history of walking alongside each other.

Goshen College Recognizes 2014-2015 Student Leaders



Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus, a junior Interdisciplinary major from Mount Rainier, MD, is one of twelve Goshen College students serving on the Student Senate during the 2014-15 academic year. Cecilia attends Hyattsville Mennonite Church.

Cecilia is also serving as a Ministry Leader at Goshen College for the 2014-15 academic year. Ministry Leaders provide programming that nurtures the spiritual lives of Goshen College students and promote on- and off-campus opportunities for spiritual care.

The Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Pittsburgh, Physically Moving, Spiritually Moving

The Bhutanese-Nepali Church of Pittsburgh continues to meet and celebrate their lives in Christ. A recent move to the Brentwood section of Pittsburgh, has brought the church's location closer to where many of their community have been relocating. They experienced a tremendous generosity from the Stewart Avenue Evangelical Lutheran Church who agreed to host their meetings. A recent Sunday on Oct. 29, saw a strong attendance of 75. The new sanctuary is much brighter in color and the platform space more conducive to the active worship leading of their youth.

On this particular day, 9 youth were involved in the worship team. A drum set, guitar, and strong singing, along with movement are driving the worship style into a more energetic expression of faith. One unique expression of worship is the spontaneous prayer that invites every attendee to pray their heart before the Lord.

Following worship, two children's birthdays were celebrated. Each candle was lit by separate guests, not in celebration of their years, but to illuminate the cake. The photo shows the children and a mother and grandmother.



Pastor Suraj is astounded by God's grace in bringing back a number of families who had left the church over four months ago. Reconciliation has been at work bringing healing in the process. Allegheny Mennonite Conference continues to offer support for this ongoing ministry on the west side of Pittsburgh. This first generation of people arriving on our shores has found home and is working hard to minister in Christ to a people who struggle hard with a new culture. If you can help continue the support of this ministry, please contact the Allegheny Mennonite Conference office. After three years, we need to reenergize our level of support since people lose touch with the needs and vision of this powerful witness and community. Those who remain in close contact with them, are astounded at the adjustments, courage and faith of this new community.

—Conrad Mast, *Scottdale Mennonite Church*

Tri State Sale Work Continues

TriState Relief Sale is continuing to support Mennonite Central Committee's programs of helping those in need. The Kaufman Mennonite Church in Davidsville, PA, held their annual workday in October. Nineteen persons met Friday evening, October 17, where 675 school kits were packed and sent to MCC for immediate use.

Twenty-six persons met Saturday, October 18, with ladies working on a queen-sized whole cloth quilt and knotting several full/queen comforters. The men worked on a storage bench, picture frames and wall shelves. These projects will be for sale at the auction at the 2015 Tristate Relief Sale to be held July 17 & 18.

—Harriet Berg, *Springs Mennonite Church*

New Life Celebrates 20 Years



New Life Mennonite Church celebrated 20 years of service to God on October 26, 2014. This church began as an idea in the minds of a group of people who wanted to start a Mennonite Church in Somerset closer to where they lived. Four couples met at Lowell and Laura Kurtz's house for dinner and in their living room they came up with the name of New Life Mennonite Church. The four couples were Lowell and Laura Kurtz, Glenn and Evelyn Moyer, Allen and Gloria Kaufman, and ElRoy and Jean Cable.

On November 13, 1994, the first service was held for New Life Mennonite Church at the Allegheny Mennonite Conference Office. Many people in the Somerset area attended this new church. Within a year, New Life was outgrowing the small office space. On Christmas Eve day, December 24, 1995, the first service was held in the new building in Listie, PA. Now in 2014, New Life Mennonite Church is still meeting the needs of the people in the communities of Listie and Somerset.

Pastor Ron Spory has been the pastor for 14 years. Through his dedication, commitment, and sacrifice to God, he encourages people by his example to reach out to others with the love of Christ. He also encouraged us at the celebration by reading Hebrews 10:25 "And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." He shared with us that we can be thankful to have a building to meet in where people with problems can get help when needed. People have come and gone and this church can be a stepping stone for a person's Spiritual growth. It is good that people feel comfortable calling and coming to the church for support.

Ruth Ann Allison shared how New Life has been a huge part in her mental health recovery in her adult years. John Fritz shared how Pastor Ron reached out to him when he became blind. John always felt welcomed and is glad for a place to come to worship God. He is now the janitor and is on the discipleship team. ElRoy Cable shared how he left his home church where he and his wife Jean were married in to start New Life Mennonite Church. He thanks God for the good changes in his life and that he continues to grow closer to God.

Pastor Ron had a prayer to thank God for His faithfulness in the past and to dedicate the future of New Life to God. We sang three songs, "I Love to tell the Story", "Great is Thy Faithfulness", and "Go Now in Peace". There were 11 people in attendance. New Life Mennonite Church may be small in number but we are reaching lives for the Kingdom of God one person at a time. May God continue to bless New Life as we continue to be faithful to Him and each other.

Ruth Ann Allison

Goshen Music Groups include AMC Students

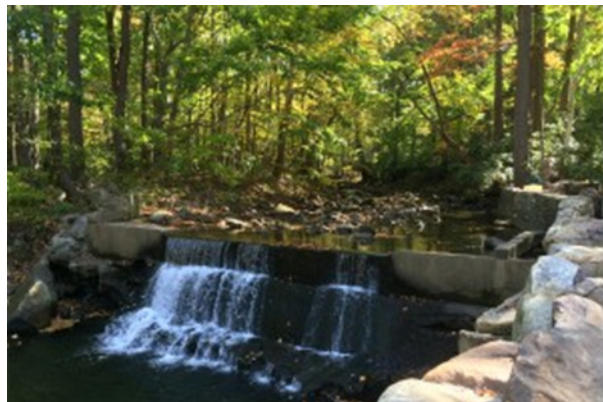
Several Goshen College music groups include students from Allegheny Conference. Members of the Goshen College Chamber Choir include:

- **Jacob Smucker**, a senior Music major from Woodward, PA who attends University Mennonite Church,
- **Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus**, a junior Interdisciplinary major from Mount Rainier, MD, who attends Hyattsville Mennonite Church,
- **Brody Thomas**, a senior Music major from Springs, PA, and Springs Mennonite Church.
- **Grace Weaver**, a junior English major from Harrisonburg, VA, previously from Scottdale Mennonite Church, along with **Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus** are members of the Goshen College Women's World Music Choir.
- **Jacob Smucker** is also a member of the Men's Chorus.



Pastor Retreat is “Rest for the Soul”

Eighteen pastors and spouses gathered at Laurelville on October 10-12 as the guests of Allegheny Conference for a retreat designed for relaxation and restoration. The weekend included worship experiences, story-telling, laughing, and sharing delicious food in that restful setting.



Donna Mast led the worship times using the text from Matthew 11:28, “Come to me... all who are heavy-laden. I will give you rest for your soul...” She also led from the material she had prepared for the most recent CLC meeting using the Mennonite Church USA theme passage of the Emmaus walk. The sharing of communion on Sunday morning was a meaningful conclusion of the worship times.



A much-appreciated feature of retreats has been the sharing of our stories. This year Randall Schlabach, Steve Sauder, and Conrad Mast told of the significant events in their lives. “Get-aquainted” activities led by Merle and Evie Christner added laughter and a few insights into each others’ lives.

As in years past, plenty of time for walks, naps, games, and other activities was available. Pastors and spouses all expressed appreciation for this opportunity of refreshment.

—Evie Christner, Pinto Mennonite Church

Isaac Tice Serves in MVS

ELKHART, Ind. (Mennonite Mission Network) – Isaac Tice of Salisbury, Pa., began a one-year term of Mennonite Voluntary Service in August 2014 in Madison, Wis., as Habitat ReStore warehouse assistant with Habitat for Humanity of Dane County ReStore.

A 2013 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., Tice is the son of Carolyn and Enos Tice, and he is a member of Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Rooted in the spirit of Jesus, MVS invites adults, age 20 and older, together for Christian ministry for one- to two-year terms in 13 locations in the United States. For more information about Mennonite Voluntary Service, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve/MVS.



Madison, Wisconsin MVS (left to right) Marike Stucky, Rebecca Dutcher, Allison Krawiec, Isaac Tice

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.