



Indiana-Michigan  
Mennonite Conference

**weLink**

*connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference*

**July 8, 2015**



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### Conference Office Closed July 20-26

The Conference office will be closed June 20-26, the week of Mennonite World Conference.

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### Closing Celebration for Hilltop Fellowship

It is with a mixture of sadness and relief that we announce the closing of Hilltop Fellowship, formerly Petoskey Mennonite Church, and invite you to join us in a celebration of the life of the church, and of God's grace shared with the community during our 65 years. This ceremony will take place on Sunday, August 23, at 3:00 p.m., in the church at 812 Petoskey Street, Petoskey, Michigan. Following the service, you are welcome to stay and fellowship over light refreshments. We look forward to your sharing this time with us.

Please RSVP by contacting Nan Behan at [nan462001@yahoo.com](mailto:nan462001@yahoo.com).

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## June Financial Report

Many congregations made their contributions in May resulting in contributions of \$41,611 for May. June showed a negative \$14,323 which was less than April's negative \$18,037. For the year the income less expenses was a negative \$42,431. This is being addressed in the new spending plan. Pass through funds (funds accepted by Conference and forwarded to many different agencies throughout the area – both Mennonite and non Mennonite) remain high at \$600,026.

As always, we thank you for your support for conference. Please consider adding support in one or more of these four ways: prayers, personnel (volunteer time), funding, and feedback.

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## Annual Sessions Overview from Former Moderator

Our Annual Conference Sessions showed us we do have interest in something more than sexuality as we listened to stories of congregational missional engagements and new possibilities from the PLANT Network. We might identify two prominent themes from our three days together: Lament and Invitation.

Lament was spoken and felt as we acknowledged our inability to maintain membership ties to more congregations needing to leave affiliation with our conference. Included in this lament was a blessing as we offered them our love and continued care in a new, undefined relationship. Lament was also felt as we recognized the difficulty ahead as we navigate a way forward through our conflict and brokenness in the coming year.

Invitation was experienced in many ways. Pastors were invited to care for

themselves and their congregations by learning about boundaries and maintaining healthy relationships; and deepening awareness and understanding about persons of whom boundaries were broken and wounds were given.

Congregations were invited through stories and experiences to consider mission and possibilities of renewed energy and life in their congregational contexts. We heard about new, creative ways of finding God's presence and action already at work in the world and joining in.

Invitation was offered for considering and supporting new church plants in our conference through the PLANT Network. The energy and life portrayed by the church planters encouraged those present and invigorated our conference sessions.

And, we heard again the invitation by the Unity and Variance Discernment Group to uphold their work in prayer, to avail ourselves to the processes planned for the next year and to remember that God is our focus, guide and Lord as we worship together.

The excursions planned for Saturday morning gave those participating a delightful way to hear and see what is happening with God's people in the Indianapolis area. Many of us came away with renewed spirits and new learnings to experiment with in our own communities.

All in all, the gathering of our conference congregations was a time to hear, in the midst of our cultural reality, the invitation God is offering and then to joyfully follow Jesus.

As ex-Moderator now, I am grateful for the many persons who are committed to Indiana and Michigan Conference and its mission. I pray that with God's Holy Spirit, we can find a way into a shared future out of a precious and deeply shared history. May we continue to be empowered through the Holy Spirit, guided by the Biblical narrative of God's great story, imitative of the One we follow-Jesus Christ- as we grow into Love and know God's heart.

-Jane Stoltzfus-Buller

Doug Kaufman, conference pastor for leadership transitions, will ordain Rod Hollinger-Janzen at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, on Sunday, July 12, at 1:30 pm for his leadership of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. Pastor Siaka Troare of Burkina Faso, chair of the AIMM board, will be the preacher.

Doug Kaufman and Lois Kaufmann of Central District Conference will ordain Rebecca Kauffman at Paoli Mennonite Church, Paoli, IN, on Sunday, July 19 at the morning service.

Doug Kaufman will install Steve Slagel as interim pastor at Maple River Mennonite Church, Brutus, MI, Sunday, August 23, at the morning service.

Hilltop Fellowship (formerly Petoskey Mennonite Church) will hold a closing service celebrating their many years of ministry on Sunday, August 23, at 3 pm. All are welcome.

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## Bethany Christian Schools Employment Opportunity

Business Manager opening at Bethany Christian Schools: Currently a 50% job-share position (full-time may be considered). For more information see [bethanycs.net/jobs](http://bethanycs.net/jobs) or contact [tlehman@bethanycs.net](mailto:tlehman@bethanycs.net).

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*weLink* connects IN-MI Conference congregations to each other, to the conference organizations Amigo Centre, Bethany Christian Schools and to the wider church. It is published on the second Wednesday of each month. *weLink* issues are archived on the conference website at [im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/](http://im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/).

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