



Indiana-Michigan
Mennonite Conference

weLink

connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference

August 12, 2015



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IN-MI Conference Office Closed for Labor Day

The Conference Office will be closed on Monday, September 7, in honor of the Labor Day holiday. Staff will resume regular office hours on Tuesday, September 8, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Staff Updates

Staff updates

True to form, summer has seen staff scattering to different parts of the country for personal and work reasons. Summer is an excellent time for connections and family, as many constituents are also taking advantage of summer breaks. John and Shirley Powell, though, had to cancel some plans because John wasn't feeling well and needed some tests. We are glad he's feeling better.

Seeing Indiana-Michigan Conference people at convention and Mennonite World Conference was an extra perk of being at those events. Both were significant in the Mennonite world. Regardless of how things unfold in the coming days, we are different because of time spent around tables in Kansas City. Mennonite World Conference was a reminder that Mennonite Church USA is one part of an Anabaptist family stretching around the world. (For information click on these links: [Mennonite Church USA convention](#), or [Mennonite World Conference](#).)

As you know, congregations continue as ambassadors of Christ in your communities even through the summer, and staff are always glad to celebrate and confer with you along the way. We anticipate that as we move into the fall, we will experience more implications of staff cuts. As we live into them, we will prioritize activity around the three C's identified by MLT as staff priorities: credentialing, connecting, and celebrating. See the May/June issue of *Gospel Evangel* for a general description. The primary change may be felt across northern Indiana. Dan Miller will begin connecting with Area Councils and pastors. We seek to be converted as we pursue God's mission in the world.

Pastors are invited to a Sabbath day on September 21. This invitation comes from staff, Missional Leadership Team (MLT) and the Unity and Variance Task Group (UVTG). Plans continue to be clarified. Watch for more information and an RSVP. We do not have many gatherings just for pastors, but believe this is a significant moment to gather in God's presence. We want to listen, speak and discern together. Please pray for this gathering, and the planning for it.

Dan, Doug and John will all be in northern Michigan for several events later this month. Hilltop Fellowship in Petoskey, Mich. holds a closing celebration on August 23. Wildwood Mennonite Church celebrates 75 years on the same weekend. We join both congregations in giving thanks for the good news of Jesus being shared, and lives being touched.

Congregations are evaluating their relationship with this community of congregations. It is always helpful when congregations share with us that a process is happening. This is a challenging time, and everyone must discern to the best of their ability how God is leading them.

Seeking congregational stories for *Gospel Evangel*

Staff are always watching for stories of congregations being changed by mission. This direction we've set for ourselves is sometimes bumpy and challenging, sometimes rewarding and nourishing. Stories of what is being learned and how it impacts congregational reality help everyone know we are not alone in the journey.

Congregational Coaches available

If your congregation has been considering getting a congregational coach, contact Leadership Enhancement Team (Jeff Mumaw, Brenda Yoder, Rhonda Yoder, Marshall Anderson, Alan Kreider) to begin the process.

Volunteer opportunities

After we announced Cindy Steiner's offer to volunteer in the conference office, several other people expressed interest. Staff want to think creatively about how to maximize contributions by volunteers. If you have a desire or an idea, please contact the office.

Financial Report

We are off to a good start financially thanks to your generous support. Income is above budget and expenses are below budget. As your new bookkeeper I look forward to becoming better acquainted with the workings of Conference so that in future reports I can share more of these aspects that will be helpful in your understanding of the financial part of Conference.

Unity and Variance Task Group Given Opportunity to Make Recommendations

The Unity and Variance Task Group of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference has been given the opportunity to make recommendations to the conference's Missional Leadership Team about how we understand "unity and

variance”. That is, the task group has been asked to examine our common beliefs and practices and our response when congregations differ from them. A recommendation on this discernment process is expected to be presented to the Missional Leadership Team in April of 2016.

The Unity and Variance Task Group has listened carefully at numerous conference gatherings:

1. The 2014 Annual Sessions where we had three rounds of table feedback within a worship context.
2. Both north and south delegate sessions in March 2015 where all present continued the table discussion and listened to each other.
3. Through a conference-wide survey in early 2015
4. The 2015 Annual Sessions where the task group presented its mid-point learnings

The next opportunity for gathering and sharing will be the Pastors Sabbatical Day on September 21st. We pray that all pastors will come to be refreshed and share deeply with one another.

Mennonite Church Planting Summit, March 31-April 2, 2016

Save the Date! Mennonite Church Planting Summit, March 31 – April 2, 2016, New Orleans, LA. Gather with more than one hundred Mennonite church planters, coaches, and leaders involved in planting the seeds of God’s reign in many different contexts around our country. We will be hosted by a Mennonite church plant in New Orleans.

[Details to follow](#)

Mauricio Chenlo, Denominational Minister for Church Planting

Andre Gingerich Stoner, Director of Holistic Witness

Amigo Centre

Join us September 18-20, 2015 for **MCC Bike Michiana**. Enjoy a weekend of riding, fellowship and raising funds for Mennonite Central Committee. Come join the bikers in riding between 70-100 miles over two days pedaling the beautiful lake and farmland region of southern Michigan and northern Indiana. Fellowship and worship included! If you are not a biker, consider donating on behalf of someone who is participating or become a sponsor. This year the project is raising funds for **Syrian Refugee Relief**. Brochures and additional information available online or call for details. <http://www.amigocentre.org/mcc-bike-michiana.htm>

Amigo Centre has two **Scrapbooking, Crafting and Quilting Retreats** remaining for this year. September 25-27 and December 4-6. We provide the opportunity to balance your productivity with time to rest, restore and refresh your body and soul. Registration is now available online. Check our web page or call for details. <http://www.amigocentre.org/scrapbooking-crafters-retreat.html>

Plan now to join us for all or part of **Celebrate Amigo** October 16-18, 2015. This is your opportunity to “Celebrate, Enjoy and Support” Amigo at the peak of fall colors, as well as participate in various activities scheduled throughout the day on Saturday. As always, we will have a silent and live auction to raise funds for needed improvements. Please send your donated items or come to bid and buy from the wonderful assortment of items that many so generously give. Without this additional financial support and God’s blessing, the Amigo ministry is not possible. Please consider joining us! Watch for more details to come. <http://www.amigocentre.org/celebrate-amigo.html>

Save the date! **Pastoral Leadership Team** weekend is scheduled for November 13-15, 2015. Our speaker this fall is Gilberto Flores, speaking on Soul Care. More details coming soon! <http://www.amigocentre.org/pastoral-leadership-team-retreat.html>

Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats

- Remember to save the date of Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats on your calendar.
- **Junior High Retreats:** January 8-10 or February 12-14
- **Senior High Retreats:** January 15-17 or February 19-21
- Watch for additional details. We hope to see you here!

IN-MI Mennonite Women Fall Women and Girls Retreat

IN-MI Mennonite Women

Fall Women and Girls Retreat: October 9-11 at Amigo Centre

Growing (up) together in Christ

Reading the Bible is especially exciting and enlightening when we do it with people from other generations, congregations, and cultures. This year's retreat invites girls in third grade and up to come enjoy an intergenerational time of worship and fellowship. Check out <http://www.amigocentre.org/in-mi-mennonite-womens-fall-retreat.html> for more information including online registration.

Pastor Transitions

Doug Kaufman, pastor for leadership transitions, is installing Steve Slagel as interim pastor at Maple River Mennonite Church, Brutus, MI, on August 23.

Hilltop Mennonite Fellowship is having a final service celebrating over 60 years of ministry in Petoskey, MI. Everyone is welcome to attend the 2 pm service.

conference website at im.mennonite.net/welink-archive/.

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

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