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Please include blurbs from weLink (as applicable) in your church bulletins and/or newsletters. Thank you!

Christian Formation Resource of the Month

12 Scriptures – First Mennonite, Indianapolis

Description: As a congregation, we wanted to identify the 12 scriptures that would best guide the identity and mission of our church. This was a multi-step process. We began by asking each household to list 12 scriptures. The elders then selected 30 scriptures from the 117 submitted by households and gave these 30 to small groups and a Sunday School class to select the top 12. The 12 scriptures that were selected the most often by small groups and the Sunday School class became... [read more](#)

To view more formation practices compiled by the Christian Formation Task Group, visit im.mennonite.net/resources/christian-formation-resources-living-in-the-word/.

Conference News

Administrative Team Update

Happy New Year! As I wrote in a letter to pastors on New Year's Day, we do not know "what joys and sorrows the next 365 days will bring." 2014 is only a few days old. We anticipate a year of growth and opportunities. Since much of the growth in our lives comes from struggle, we may anticipate challenges along the way. May we end 2014 more in love with Jesus, more trusting of God's goodness and more willing to risk obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Two events I look forward to attending later this month are the Northern Michigan Pastor-Spouse retreat and an Advisory Council meeting. David Miller will provide input for the retreat and I invite your prayers for the couples who will attend. I missed the fall Advisory Council meeting

because I was on sabbatical, and look forward to connecting with this group soon. Gene Hartman, conference moderator-elect, is chair of the Advisory Council and will lead the meeting.

At the end of January every year, the moderators and conference ministers of Illinois, Ohio, Central District and IN-MI conferences gather for a semi-annual coordination meeting. Even though we are four distinct conferences, there are opportunities and concerns we have in common, and we find it beneficial to touch base. It is a gift to have co-workers like Tom Kauffman, Lois Kaufmann and Chuck Neufeld.

A higher number of congregations are searching for and credentialing pastors at this time, so there are extra search committees and interviews for Doug to coordinate. Since the number of searches are again climbing, we are considering options to effectively manage the increased volume. Also, Doug may be called to jury duty. While we don't yet know what impact that might have on our schedule, we will work to keep congregational processes moving along.

Congregations faithfully engaging the world God loves will encounter new and challenging situations. Kern Road Mennonite Church is hosting a Healthy Congregations seminar on February 7-8 and inviting other congregations to join them. This is useful material for pastors and congregational leaders seeking healthy ways to influence their groups. See the announcement in this weLink and follow the links.

Annual Sessions 2014 planning is making progress. "Broken...Beloved" is the theme and the scripture passage is 1 John 4:7-12. Greg talked with pastors in the Goshen area council and they agreed to be hosts this year. We look forward to seeing everyone June 20-22, 2014 on the Goshen College campus.

IN-MI Conference has been contacted by the John Howard Yoder Discernment Group about sharing the conference story regarding the disciplinary process of Yoder. The Administrative Team wants to be constructively engaged with this process, and have begun considering how to respond to the layers of questions involved in this process.

The Advancement Team met recently and set out some next steps that we are following. This is important work as we consider how to carry out sustainable ministry on behalf of our community of congregations that is Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. It is also important as congregations help their members think about how commitments to Jesus impact their financial decisions. I will continue working with the team and other leadership groups as we pursue our plan in 2014.

—Dan Miller

Missional Leadership Team Update

The Missional Leadership Team (MLT) met on December 15, 2013. It was good to have Dan Miller back with us as it was his first meeting with the board since his three month sabbatical ended. We enjoyed a report from him as he shared his sabbatical experiences.

Major business of the day included continued work on a review of our conference structure implemented 4.5 years ago. We invited former and present chairs of our leadership teams to reflect on how they experience the structure in their particular work. The insights and experience shared was instructive for our continued consideration of how our conference functions. We will be distributing a report of our structural review and hope to implement some minor changes in the system. Look for this at our Regional Meetings this spring.

Another continuing focus is the advancement process the Stewardship Team is overseeing. Dan returned ready to be present and helpful in this process. We hope our conference organization and all of our congregations will benefit from this process to improve support for our common mission of joyfully following Jesus. Our hope is to have some practical ways of joining together to advance God's work in the world.

Len Harms, our representative on the Amigo Centre Board, invited responses to several initiatives Amigo is considering to enhance their mission and ministry as well as make it more viable financially. We appreciate his work with the Board on our behalf.

As MLT continues to work on your behalf to faithfully follow God's leading as a Conference of Congregations, we invite your prayers, your financial contributions and your sharing of how God is present with you and your communities of faith. Our prayer is that the peace of Christ might be with us all.

—Jane Stoltzfus Buller for MLT

Credentialing and Installations

On January 26, Lois Kaufmann of Central District Conference and Doug Kaufman of Indiana-Michigan will ordain **Moriah Hurst** at Assembly for her role as a Mennonite Mission Network associate with Praxis in Australia.

On February 2, Doug Kaufman will ordain **Philip Wiechart** at Locust Grove as chaplain at Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids.

On February 9, Conference Pastor Dan Miller will ordain **Talashia Keim Yoder** as young adult pastor at College Mennonite.

—Doug Kaufman

Healthy Congregations Workshop for Church Leaders

Do you wonder how you, as a leader, can influence the health of your congregation to detect and avoid unhealthy patterns of living together in community? Do you wish to gain confidence in responding to challenges and opportunities? To learn how to put limits on invasive behavior, manage reactivity and overcome sabotage?

Kern Road Mennonite Church (with support from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.) is bringing Richard Blackburn, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Executive Director and Consultant, to South Bend, IN to lead a Healthy Congregations workshop. The funding for this means an unusual opportunity for you and your congregation's leaders to attend Healthy Congregations at substantially reduced registration fees (\$60/pers. if registered before Jan 10 – price reduces further for groups of 4+!). Registration includes lunch on Saturday and all materials. Register now to secure places at the table for yourself and your entire leadership team! **February 7-8, 2014** at Kern Road Mennonite Church. A [brochure and registration form](#) can be found online. If you have questions, send an email to krmc@krmc.net.

Transitional Ministry Training

Transitional ministry has a unique place in the mission of the church. While “interim pastors” have provided preaching and pastoral care between pastor assignments for many years, “transitional ministry” involves training to lead congregations through a process of preparation for entering a new chapter of leadership. **March 10-14, 2014**, Amigo Centre will host a Transitional Ministry Training retreat for individuals interested in pursuing this type of ministry. Visit <http://tmt.amigocentre.org/> for additional information, or contact Amigo Centre at 269-651-2811.

Resource Corner

Looking for a new Bible study course or Sunday school curriculum? Check out *Creating a Scene in Corinth: A Simulation* by Reta Halteman Finger and George D. McClain.

Creating a Scene imaginatively draws readers into Chloe's house church, which has just received a letter from their church planter, the apostle Paul. Using group simulation, the book brings to life scholarly research on how the gospel penetrated the Roman Empire. As participants role-play early believers and debate with each other, they gain new insights and will never read 1 Corinthians the same way again. Learn more at <http://store.mennomedia.org/Creating-a-Scene-in-Corinth-P1502.aspx>.



News from Conference Organizations

Amigo Centre (www.amigocentre.org)

2014 Scrapbooking, Quilting & Crafters Retreats

March 14-16, April 11-13, May 9-10, Sept 26-28, December 5-7

Whether you scrapbook, quilt, or have another craft that you love, Amigo invites you to join us for a weekend to enjoy crafting and good fellowship. Come by yourself or bring your friends. We will provide the space, lodging, great food and just the right amount of focused input to allow you time for your projects as well as fun and fellowship. The beautiful surroundings at Amigo and the creativity of other participants will inspire! We provide the opportunity to balance your productivity with time to rest, restore and refresh your body and soul. April and December include quilting projects and instruction led by Carol Honderich. Watch for our new brochure and information on the web at www.amigocentre.org.

Bethany Christian Schools (<http://www.bethanycs.net/>)

John McCutcheon Concert

Internationally-renowned folksinger John McCutcheon will be in concert Saturday, March 29, at 7 pm at Bethany. Reserved seating tickets are just \$20 and may be [purchased online](#), in person, or by calling the school at 574-534-2567.

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/. To subscribe to or unsubscribe from *weLink*, email imoffice@im.mennonite.net.

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