

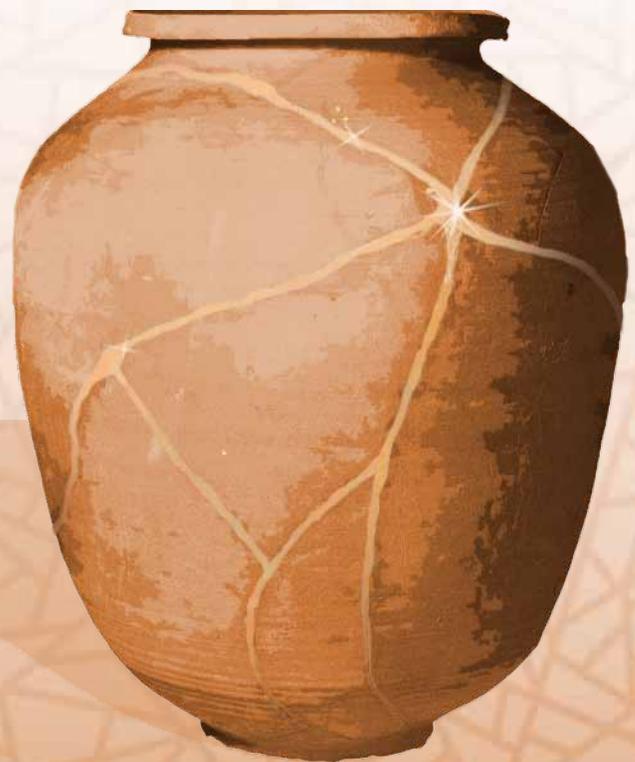
gospel evangel

connecting the congregations of
indiana-michigan mennonite conference

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Broken... Beloved

1 John 4:7-12



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Annual Sessions 2014

June 20-22 | College Mennonite Church
on the campus of Goshen College

Join Us for Annual Sessions 2014

Scripture text – 1 John 4:7-12

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. (NRSV)

Location and Hosts

Annual Sessions will be held at College Mennonite Church (1900 S. Main St.) on the Goshen College campus. Thank you in advance to our hosts, the Goshen Area Council, which includes the congregations of Assembly, Berkey Avenue, Buen Pastor, College, East Goshen, Faith, Family Worship Center, North Goshen, and Walnut Hill.

Worship Speakers

- Friday afternoon: **Dan Miller**, conference pastor, IN-MI Mennonite Conference
- Friday evening: **Julia Gingrich**, M.Div. graduate, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Saturday evening: **Safwat Marzouk**, assistant professor of Old Testament, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary



Dan Miller Julia Gingrich Safwat Marzouk

Annual Sessions Schedule (tentative)

Friday, June 20	
11 am – 7 pm	Registration
1:15 – 2:15 pm	Opening worship
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 – 4:30 pm	Worshipful work #1
5 – 6:30 pm	Dinner
5 – 6:45 pm	Pastor appreciation dinner
7 – 8:30 pm	Worship
8:30 pm	Ice cream served by MLT
Saturday, June 21	
6:30 – 8:15 am	Breakfast
8:30 – 9 am	Coffee
8:45 – 11 am	Worshipful work #2
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Lunch
	<i>Mennonite Women lunch</i>
	<i>Mennonite Men lunch</i>
	<i>Retired pastors lunch</i>
1 – 3 pm	Seminars
3 – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 – 4:30 pm	Worshipful work #3
5 – 6:30 pm	Dinner
7 – 8:30 pm	Worship
8:30 pm	Snack / celebration of youth service project
Sunday, June 22	
6:30 – 8:15 am	Breakfast
	Worship in local congregations

Registration

Please note the changes in our registration fees:

- \$45 on or before May 9
- \$75 beginning May 10
- \$90 on-site registration after 12 pm EDT June 9

To register online, visit im.mennonite.net/calendar/annual-sessions. Those unable to register online, please contact the conference office at 574-534-4006.

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Broken...Beloved Reflections on the Annual Sessions Theme

By **Suella Gerber**, Annual Sessions coordinator

Christine Sine, from Mustard Seed Associates, opened her Lenten season reflections this year with the following words:



Recently I discovered the Japanese art of Kintsugi in which ceramics are mended with resin infused with gold powder. The repair highlights the brokenness, creating a transformed item of great beauty. It reminded me of the transformation God wants to accomplish as we journey with Christ towards the Cross.

The beauty emerges only when we recognize something is both broken and valuable. When we pretend that things are not broken, they cannot be renewed and transformed. When we think they are irreparable, we throw them out and often miss the beauty of what God wants to create.

These words beautifully speak to our Annual Sessions theme. As the Conference Program Planning Committee began thinking and talking about a theme for 2014, we found ourselves returning to the fundamentals of our faith—that we are, first of all, broken and beloved creatures of Creator God.

The Leadership Enhancement Team, tasked with planning seminars for Saturday afternoon, spent considerable time talking about what we want to have happen. What difference do we hope these seminars will make when we return to our congregations? In talking about our own experiences and longings for the church, five seminars emerged.

It is our hope that in worship and in work, as well as in conversations and storytelling, we will be returned to our primary identity as daughters and sons of the Living God, and find ourselves saved by the power of God's love, seen in the person of Jesus.

2014 Annual Sessions Seminars

Us and Them

Suella Gerber and Nick Simons

The congregations we are a part of are diverse in a multitude of ways, and yet many of our churches are struggling to reach out and minister to the diverse communities we are in. There are many reasons why, but perhaps one reason is our failure to recognize the unifying fact that we are all broken and we are all beloved. In this session, we will explore the ways we view others, ourselves, and God. Celebrating the depth of God's love can help us come to terms with brokenness, unlocking our ability to minister to others and bringing healing to our own lives and revival to our own faith.

Behind the Picture-Perfect Image:

Revealing our brokenness and discovering our belovedness
Brenda L. Yoder

Is your church a safe place to express your struggles, or sin, or inner conflict? Do you have the freedom to share your pain and failure? One of the biggest challenges of being the church is knowing how to respond to brokenness when we can't fix it. In this session, we will take a step away from our addiction to image and dive into a healthy, biblical response to brokenness—the Good News of Jesus!

Reconnecting

Marshall Anderson

Our culture finds itself in paradox. Hungry for meaning, purpose, and love, every day more and more people step away from the fast food offered by churches. The Mennonite Church is positioned to offer sustenance to those who are hungry for authentic faith and authentic community—if we can begin to ask the right questions. Why should we make a change? What needs to change? What does God desire for our churches? In this session, we will address our desire to be saved—to be authentic, healthy congregations. We will explore some of the barriers we have set up to living in that reality, and how God might liberate us to move forward in unity.

Practices and Resources

Linda Lehman Thomas and Julie Stegelmann

It can be so easy to neglect our own spiritual well-being. We are busy and life seems to just move faster every day. We want to experience new life and spiritual vitality. We want to be excited about our faith again. We look to worship services, prayer meetings, or a special revival to kick start our enthusiasm. Those are great things, but there is much we can do to take responsibility for our own spiritual well-being and faith formation. In this session, we will explore a sampling of spiritual disciplines and resources that are available to help us in our spiritual self-care.

Congregational discernment

The details of this seminar are still in process.

intercultural transformation

Adaptive Congregations

By **Darin Short**, Berkey Avenue Mennonite

This article is the fourth and final in a series of articles seeking to provide a beginning understanding of what it means to be “intercultural” in a congregational context. This article will have the most meaning if you have read the other three articles, which can be found in Gospel Evangel issues from Nov/Dec 2012, Jan/Feb 2013, and Jul/Aug 2013.

We know how to adapt!

Throughout life, there are many situations that nurture our ability to adapt. Whether in our work or our church involvement—whether in our roles as parents, spouses, children, or volunteers—we experience the need to take on different roles and identities, and to adapt to different responsibilities and tasks.

The different roles we fill evoke different behaviors, thoughts, and emotions—whether subtle or significant. While being our authentic selves, we may experience a need to do things differently, to tap into unique ways of thinking, and to manage conflicting emotions, based on a role we carry in a given moment.

Consider the roles required of an individual who is both a parent of young children *and* an employee. Imagine participating in an intense meeting at the end of the work day. When you arrive home, your 10-year-old asks to play outside and your 4-year-old wants to color with markers. You are still carrying with you emotions and thoughts from the meeting. But now you need to immediately draw on different emotions, thoughts, words, and actions. Just as important to note is the fact that you may have the same emotion or feeling in both settings, but you express it in different ways. Perhaps the meeting stirs the compassion that you have for the people you work with, yet the compassion you have for your children “feels,” and is expressed, differently.

Those of us in other roles or identities may have experienced this same kind of adaptation. Maybe it involves transitioning between the roles of sister and grandchild, spouse and volunteer, parent and step-parent, worship participant and Sunday school leader, grandparent and neighbor, preacher and conversationalist.

These scenarios provide an insight into the basics of adaptation in a congregational context. Cross-cultural adaptation in the life of a congregation is obviously much more complex than these examples, but they do highlight the essential components of adaptation: feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and motivations. They also highlight the fact that we have the capacity to modify and adjust in various life situations. We learn to adapt in many ways.

The Adaptive Congregation

A congregation in the final stage of intercultural development is one that is learning to adapt. An adaptive congregation possesses a cultural *awareness* that is accompanied by *intercultural competence*. What are the characteristics of intercultural competent congregations?

- They intentionally shift perspective and adopt new behaviors.
- They use cultural differences as a resource regularly, routinely, and comfortably.
- They have a shared identity that includes use of multiple traditions and the shared creation of new traditions.
- They utilize power in an intercultural appropriate manner—neither avoiding nor abusing power, but

Sister Care Seminar in Kokomo

A Sister Care seminar with presenters Carolyn Heggen and Rhoda Keener is coming to Howard-Miami Mennonite Church (Kokomo, Indiana) on April 25-26, 2014. Sister Care seminars provide women with tools for ongoing personal healing, for recognizing and celebrating God’s grace in their lives, and for responding more confidently and effectively to the needs of others. The seminar includes four units:

- Claiming my identity as God’s beloved daughter
- Caring for self and others
- Compassionate listening
- Transforming loss and grief



Presenters Carolyn Heggen and Rhoda Keener

The Sister Care seminar has now been shared internationally in India, Nepal, Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, and Puerto Rico. As we share with our sisters around the world, we are blessed and inspired by their lives and stories.

Each participant will receive a 64-page manual. You can register by email, phone, or regular mail. Registration forms are available online at www.howardmiami.org/sistercare2014.htm. The seminar runs Friday evening 7–9 pm and Saturday 9 am – 4:30 pm.

For more information, contact **Margi Bontrager** at 765-437-3579 or margibon@comteck.com; or **Sadona Lowe** at 765-689-9310, or sflowe101@gmail.com. We hope you’ll be able to participate!

financial report

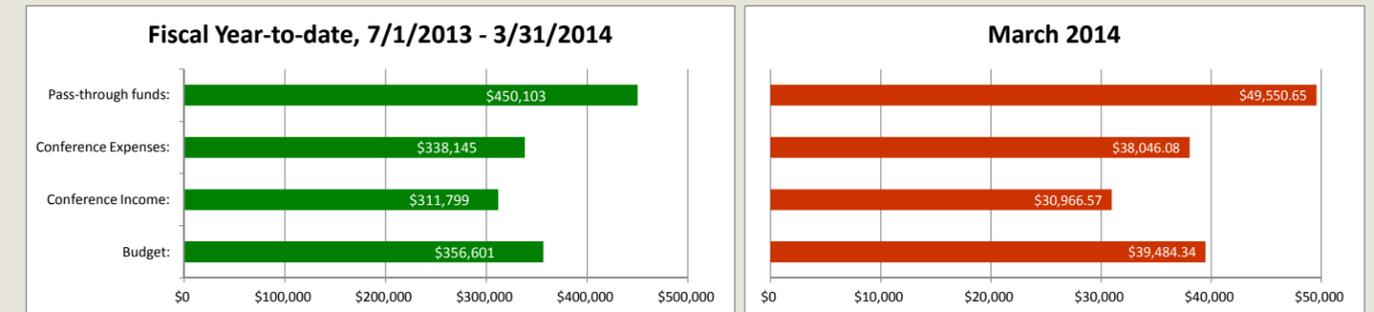
By **Greg Leatherman Sommers**, Conference Administrator

Delegate feedback from our regional meetings has been good, though financial delegates tend to be under-represented at the gatherings. Each meeting includes time for delegates to review, within their congregation, a datasheet graphing the tangible ways each congregation is relating to conference. Those discussions have been very interesting!

The proposed spending plan has also sparked good discussion and feedback. There has been concern expressed about the proposed reduction in the number of Gospel Evangel issues published each year. At the end of our discussions, specifically asking delegates how their congregation would respond and support the changes, seems to make a difference in their level of support for the plan.

Individual donors in the Missional Seeds Giving Club gave more than twice what we expected during March. Thank you! However, congregational contributions of \$28,471 lagged \$10,795 behind expectations for the month. This caused a month-end deficit of \$7,080, despite spending \$1,400 less than planned. The fiscal year to date net balance as of the end of March is negative \$26,345. On a more positive note, congregational donations through conference to other ministries exceeded \$450,000 this fiscal year to date. Great!

As your delegates return from regional meetings, ask them about your congregation’s affiliation report. And please consider increasing your individual and congregational support for conference operations.



creating a new approach to power guided by the practices of perspective-taking, adopting new behaviors, using difference as a resource, drawing on different traditions, etc.

- They are able to incorporate humor that is understood and appreciated across cultures.

What does the adapting congregation actually look like? There are an infinite number of possibilities, but I will provide a few examples found within actual congregations.

I have observed racially diverse congregations that sing African American spirituals as well as traditionally Eurocentric hymns sung in four part harmony. Church members, across racial boundaries, used gestures and body postures traditionally observed in both of these styles of music.

I have observed congregations that utilize multiple languages in every part of the worship service—songs, PowerPoint slides, newsletters, scripture readings, spoken messages, announcements—and they do so on a regular basis. The additional time allotted for this translation is not viewed as an impediment but, rather, is reflective of the prioritized value of diversity. These congregations have individual leaders—pastors, worship leaders, song leaders, etc.—that are multi-lingual and actually speak in multiple languages during the service.

It is fundamentally important to note that what often distinguishes these congregations as adaptive is their ability to *retain* diversity, in contrast to those who have an occasionally diverse, but transient, attendee population.

We should not expect a congregation will ever “arrive” at a perfected state of adaptation. Rather, adaptation is something that is intentionally and continually pursued. Employing a single adaptive strategy will not make a congregation intercultural competent. Incorporating multiple languages or multiple music styles *alone* is not a holistic approach. Rather, multiple and sustained efforts lead to a deeper and more sustainable adaptation.

I’ve had the opportunity to experience the essence of adaptation at the congregational level. So, when we ask ourselves the question, “Should we as individuals and congregations make an effort to adapt to those around us?” I can’t help but think of Paul—who became like a Jew, who became like one under the law, who became like one not under the law—and answer, yes!

Each congregation will reach this realization or awareness at different points in time, and that’s okay. My hope is that we will each make intentional efforts to develop intercultural capacities, and to make significant strides in cultivating congregational adaptation.

Summer Activities for Children and Youth

By **Kenzie Intemann**, Amigo Youth Program Director

We have just completed a wonderful Winter Youth Retreat season here at Amigo Centre. We had great groups and much fun in the snow. Our February weekends consisted of “God’s treasures for us and finding our joy in Jesus,” and “God’s love beyond all measure.” We were blessed with Wendell Nofziger as our Junior High speaker and Tig Intagliata as our Senior High speaker.

Summer camp is right around the corner! We are gearing up for another exciting, fun-filled summer, and are in the process of interviewing and hiring summer staff. We are still taking applications, so if you or someone you know is interested, apply soon!

Our camp theme this summer is “Crooked Paths Made Straight.” Our theme verse is Luke 3:4-6, “In the desert someone is shouting, ‘Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for Him. Fill up every valley and level every mountain and hill. Straighten the crooked paths and smooth out the rough roads. Then everyone will see the saving power of God.’” We will be looking at different stories where Jesus demonstrated how to make the paths straight, and see where He is calling us to do the same.

In addition to residential summer camp, Amigo also offers Day Camp opportunities throughout the summer. From

8:30 am – 3:30 pm daily, various ages will enjoy many of the same fun camp experiences as those attending the full week.

We are excited to bring back Survivor Camp! This week will consist of campers (ages 13-16) learning survival skills which will serve them well, long after they leave Amigo. We are also partnering with J&J Stables once again to offer Horse Camp.

Please pray for our staff and the young men and women that will come to enjoy the camp this summer. We pray for God’s rich blessings to pour out on us, and that we can further His Kingdom. With Him we can make the crooked paths straight.

Registration information was sent to churches in early March, and more information is available online at www.amigocentre.org. Register and pay in full by May 1 to receive an early bird discount of \$20. We look forward to seeing you at Camp Amigo this summer!



(Photos provided)



J-Term Trips Have an Impact

By **Kevin Miller**

Christian Hospitality in Little Havana

Students in Bethany’s Comunidad Cubana en Miami J-Term expected to learn about Cuban and Latino culture and improve their Spanish as they interacted with people in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami.

And they did. They listened to lectures, talked with local people, shopped in stores, and enjoyed ethnic cuisine in restaurants along Calle Ocho.

What they did not expect was to be overwhelmed by the deep generosity and hospitality extended to them by their hosts. During their weeklong stay in Miami, the 12 students along with their teacher Craig Mast (East Goshen Mennonite) and his family, were hosted by three Mennonite families originally from Honduras, who provided meals, places to sleep, and incorporated them into their daily activities including attending an evening church service.

Junior Sol Brenneman (Belmont Mennonite) says, “They were so generous with everything. We never went hungry and they gave up their beds so we had a place to sleep. Our host father even stayed at a friend’s house so there would be room for us. We saw faith in action.”

One morning, Sol and two classmates, Jesse Amstutz (Waterford Mennonite) and Roberto Ramos (Comunidad Cristiana Adulam), became engaged in a lengthy morning conversation with their host parents that lasted nearly three hours, listening to their hosts’ immigration story—why they left Honduras; the hardships in walking to the U.S., of finding food, and staying safe along the way; and the difficulties of starting over in a new country with little money, no job, no place to live, and needing to learn a new language. Jesse says, “At first Craig was upset that we had missed our morning class, but when we told him what happened, he was instead excited that we had that opportunity to hear their story.”

Juniors Kaylah Price (Harvest Community) and Carolyn Saylor (Trinity Lutheran) also enjoyed interacting with their host families, forming friendships with girls near their age, and note, “We enjoyed hanging out together and talking.



Sol Brenneman, Jesse Amstutz, and Roberto Ramos with their host family. (Photo provided)

They were sad to see us go—as were we.” They and other Bethany students formed bonds of friendships with their hosts—based in their common faith—that transcended race and culture.

As they said their good-byes, the hosts again astounded their guests by profusely thanking them for coming. Jesse says, “They were thanking us when we felt we should be thanking them. Then I realized that our being there meant that we cared about their culture and lives. And that was important to them.”

Urban Immersion Puts a Face on Civil Rights

Sitting in a Chicago neighborhood restaurant, junior Carole Evans (Shipshewana Nazarene) and several other students in Bethany’s Civil Rights J-Term watched a news report of yet another act of violence—not in Chicago, but a random shooting at a grocery store back home in Elkhart County. The news reinforced what she and her classmates had been learning—violence isn’t just an issue in poor neighborhoods of big cities. She says, “It is good to go to Chicago to learn, and to help those in need, but we can make a difference back home too.”

In addition to realizing anew that violence isn’t just a big-city issue, students also (continued on back cover)



Serving in a Chicago soup kitchen: Annie Hu (Yellow Creek), Ting-Ting He (Clinton Frame), Zoe Hunley (New Life Apostolic Pentecostal), an employee, and Ryan Oostland (Waterford).

at **bethany** (continued from p. 7)

became more aware that they can be safe in places often perceived as dangerous, such as poor urban neighborhoods. When Bethany students first arrived in Chicago, the director of the Chicago DOOR program told them, “you will be uncomfortable, but you will also be safe.” And they were uncomfortable, and troubled, as they saw a different side of Chicago from the wealth of the downtown shopping and tourist district they previously knew: dilapidated houses, disparity among racially-segregated

neighborhoods, and larger numbers of people living on the street or in shelters.

Sophomore Ryan Oostland (Waterford Mennonite) notes, “When we drive the Skyway to downtown Chicago, we pass over and see from a distance those neighborhoods where ‘we don’t go.’ This time we went.”

A highlight for junior Kati Quiggle (Calvary Assembly of God) was interacting with people as the students served in soup kitchens, shelters, thrift shops, nursing homes, and after-school programs. She found these opportunities enlightening and rewarding and says, “People I met were different in that everyone has their own story, with different experiences than I, yet they are quite normal. They are like me.”

Another highlight for many students was listening to stories from a Baptist pastor whom they affectionately called Mama Brenda. As she shared stories from her work counseling teens, students saw a different side of some issues they also face. For ninth-grader Daniel Robles (Waterford Mennonite), Mama Brenda’s stories of working with children who have been bullied brought back painful memories of his own experiences during elementary school—of being bullied to the point of not wanting to live any more—and he is thankful that he no longer experiences that.

Prior to their week in Chicago, students studied civil rights history and current issues, including slavery and its lasting effects on American society, the Civil Rights movement, and more recent events such as the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin two years ago. Eric Kaufmann (Assembly Mennonite), who developed and taught the course says, “Helping students understand the past is important as they grapple with present-day civil rights issues that are rooted in injustices from the past. And it is gratifying to see students connect their faith to the issues at hand.”

Bethany senior earns grand prize in MCC essay contest

Congratulations to Adam Krahn, a senior at Bethany Christian Schools, for his prize winning essay in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office annual essay contest.



In his essay entitled “Effectively easing global hunger,” Krahn analyzed the administration and effectiveness of U.S. international food aid. Krahn also described the role of nongovernmental organizations in eliminating global hunger and called for increased support of economic development and peacebuilding abroad. Krahn’s home congregation is Yellow Creek Mennonite (Goshen, Ind.).

Two other Bethany students received honorable mention prizes—Katie Hurst and Kinza Yoder. Hurst’s essay focused on creating justice for the people of Haiti, and Yoder wrote about addressing mass incarceration in the U.S. through the lens of restorative justice.

The annual contest is open to Anabaptist youth of high school age and to all youth who attend Mennonite high schools. Entries are judged on the participants’ understanding of the issues, clarity of argument, and degree of creativity in crafting thoughtful policy positions.

Excerpts from the winning essays can be found at washingtonmemo.org. (Adapted from an article by Agnes Chen.)

ministry transitions

Beginnings



On February 2, **Phillip Wiechart** was ordained by Dan Miller, conference pastor, at Locust Grove Mennonite Church (Burr Oak, Mich.) for chaplaincy at Spectrum Health Blodgett Hospital, Grand Rapids, Mich.



On February 9, **Talashia Keim Yoder** was ordained as pastor of young adults at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., by Doug Kaufman, conference pastor for leadership transitions.



On March 9, **Mike Score** was licensed and installed as co-pastor at Ann Arbor (Mich.) Mennonite Church by Doug Kaufman of IN-MI and Lois Kaufmann of Central District Conference.