



Indiana-Michigan  
Mennonite Conference

**weLink**

*connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference*

**November 11, 2015**



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## Office Closings

The conference office will be closed on the following days:

- \* Monday, November 16 – Staff will meet together for a semi-annual day together.
  - \* Thursday, November 26 – Thanksgiving Day.
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## Celebrating

**In November we continue the tradition of giving thanks.** Thanks be to God who sends rain on the just and the unjust, who walks with us through the ups and downs of life, who multiplies the loaves and fishes. We give thanks to the One whose ways are higher than our ways, and who cannot be contained within the boxes of our human constructs, who transforms our lives and frees us to live abundantly. We give thanks for the fall harvest with the reminder of life's ebb and flow.

THANK YOU to those who serve on conference leadership teams, who contribute to credentialing and leadership development, financial oversight, creating a culture of call, and providing governance oversight to the conference organization. Thank you!

We are grateful for God's provision of finances for the work of conference in this unknown time. Thank you to congregations who continue to pray for and contribute to our mission of joyfully following Jesus and engaging the world God loves. (see the financial report for more details)

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## Connecting

This coming weekend is an opportunity to interact with Gilberto Flores about leading from a healthy soul at Amigo Centre. Registration for this event is down significantly this year. There is still time to register!

Missional Leadership Team (MLT) meets this Friday, November 13, for an annual retreat day. MLT is seeking to sharpen and clarify messages about conference, and to lift our sights to think several years into the future.

Planning for the March delegate meetings is underway. We hope to announce dates and locations of two meetings for March 2016. There will be a slight adjustment in the way congregations/delegates are grouped.

The November-December *Gospel Evangel* should have arrived at your congregation. GE seeks to tell stories of congregations engaged in their communities and being changed by God's mission. Read what is happening at Howard-Miami Mennonite after hosting Sister Care. Ponder Pastor Phil Waite's (College Mennonite) encouragement to share our personal faith stories. What

story does your congregation have about being changed by mission?

Doug and Dan will leave Wednesday following Thanksgiving for the annual gathering of conference ministers from Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

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## **Credentialing & Leadership Development**

Dan Miller, conference pastor, will license and install Mike Yordy on November 22 at Waterford Mennonite Church for Journey Church.

Emily Hostetler and Kim Birk will be installed at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church on December 6. Emily will be licensed as pastor of worship and community life and Kim will serve as the children's' pastor.

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## **Congregational Updates**

### **Faith Mennonite chooses single affiliation**

In a September 30 congregational meeting, Faith Mennonite Church decided to end its dual-affiliation status at the end of 2015. With encouragement from Mennonite Church USA, Central District Conference and Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference for congregations to end dual-affiliations, the congregation decided to withdraw from IN-MI Conference and remain in membership with Central District. Deron Brill Bergstresser and Kay Bontrager Singer serve as the pastoral team at Faith.

After the meeting, Deron wrote: For many years we felt unable to make a decision, because of Faith's meaningful relationships and involvement in both conferences. We started the conversation again last spring and since then we have had helpful meetings with the leaders from both conferences. At our congregational meeting, we reviewed the ways that being dual affiliated makes it impossible for us to give ourselves fully to either one. The biggest concern for those present was that our withdrawal might be perceived as rejection or as a theological statement. We would like it to be clear that our leaving is in response

to years of gentle prodding by denominational and conference leaders for dual congregations to choose one conference.

Many remaining dual-affiliation congregations, like Faith Mennonite, have long and meaningful histories with both conferences which make it difficult to sever ties with one of the conferences. At one time new congregations in the Great Lakes area were mandated to be dually-affiliated to enable conferences to share limited resources cooperatively, and also in anticipation of a possible merger. After a vote to merge the mid-states conferences failed to garner the requisite support, the encouragement to singly affiliate began. Four other IN-MI Conference congregations are also affiliated with Central District Conference. **First**

### **Mennonite, Fort Wayne closing service on November 22**

In an October letter to those who have participated over the years at First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, the leadership announced: After much reflection, deliberation, and with mixed emotions, we announce the closure of First Mennonite Church here in Fort Wayne. Our congregation has been in existence and has faithfully served in this location from 1903 to 2015 for a total of 112 years.

Their final worship service will be November 22 at 10:30am. Those who have been connected over the years are invited to join this service. And we invite your congregations to be in prayer for First Mennonite, Fort Wayne, and for Peter Janzen who has been pastoring there since 2005. Can you mention them in your congregational prayers especially on that morning?

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## **October 2015 Financial Report**

October income generally lags behind expenses, as they did this month, with income of \$24,919 while expenses were \$29,552. For the fiscal year, income lags \$2300. Thanks goes to congregations and individuals who support the work of our life together.



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## Come and See Tour

### Understanding the Israel/Palestine context in which people strive for peace

Five Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference representatives are participating in a [Come and See Tour](#) to Israel/Palestine sponsored by Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee. The five are:

- Randy Detweiler (Holdeman)
- Gwen Gustafson-Zook (College)
- Leighton Miller (Wildwood)
- David Sutter (Kern Road)
- Janice Sutter (Kern Road).

Deron Bergstresser (Faith) and Dawn Yoder Harms (Assembly) pastors in dual-affiliation congregations are participating as representatives for Central District.

The tour aims to help participants gain a better understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and current realities “on the ground,” meet with Palestinian and Israeli organizations that are working for peace and justice, and return home with a commitment to engage in education and advocacy regarding justice issues in Palestine and Israel. The group is traveling November 9-21, 2015.

Delegates at Kansas City 2015 adopted a resolution committing “to understand more fully the social, economic and political context” in which people strive for peace. Following their return, each of them seeks to be available for reporting to congregations across conference about their experience and efforts for peace in the region. Watch for more information as it becomes available.

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## Journey-A Conference-Based Leadership Development Program

When God calls someone to ministry, a journey begins. Perhaps you are on that journey. Perhaps you are looking for mentors and companions along the way. Indiana-Michigan Conference invites you to join Journey: A Conference-based

Leadership Development Program. This program is for pastors and other congregational leaders who are called without specific training for ministry or who are exploring a call to pastoral ministry. The deadline to apply for spring 2016 is January 1. For more information, visit [www.journeyprogram.net](http://www.journeyprogram.net) or contact your pastor, or Dan Miller at [dan@im.mennonite.net](mailto:dan@im.mennonite.net) or at 574 534 4006.

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## Volunteers Needed

As we live into the new staffing configuration at conference, we would like to build a list of volunteers who would be willing to donate a few hours during the week, on a regular basis, to cover the front desk. If you are interested, please contact the conference office.

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## Amigo Centre

*After five years of service as Executive Director at Amigo Centre, Cliff Brubaker has submitted his resignation to the Amigo Board. The Board and Cliff have targeted January 1, 2016 as the time of transition of leadership. The Search Committee seeks resumes' from interested candidates with these desired qualities:*

- Administrative skills
  - Experience or training in finance and budgeting
  - Experience or training in camp operations
  - Good people skills
  - Live in the Amigo Centre community (Sturgis, MI)
  - Previous camp work experiences
  - Organizational management skills
  - Highly motivated
- *Committed to Mennonite core values and to Amigo Centre's mission* Please send resume' and letter of interest to: [gibson1960.sy@gmail.com](mailto:gibson1960.sy@gmail.com) Deadline is November 15, 2015.

**AMIGO E3 Survival Skills for Life** program is in need of mentors. See the link on Amigo's homepage for more information. Financial gifts and prayer support for the program are also valued. [www.amigocentre.org](http://www.amigocentre.org)

Amigo Centre has one final **Scrapbooking, Crafting and Quilting Retreat** remaining for this year, December 4-6, with early arrival starting Tuesday, December 1. 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>

## **Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats**

Amigo Centre Winter Youth Retreats are open for registration. You may register online or via mail or call in. Packets have been sent with all the information. If you have any questions, please contact us. Speaker information is also available online.

- **Junior High Retreats:** January 8-10 or February 12-14
- **Senior High Retreats:** January 15-17 or February 19-21

**We hope to see you here!**

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## **First Mennonite, Fort Wayne Wants to Donate Hymnals**

First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, IN is in the process of closure as a congregation. Our Discipling Commission met and wondered if there are any churches in the IN-MI Mennonite Conference in need of approximately 60 Hymnal Worship Books, Sing the Journey and Sing the Story supplement hymn books? We also have a complete set of Gather Round Sunday School Curriculum that needs a home. If there are any churches in need of these resources, please contact me at 260.422.6702 or [mennofw@juno.com](mailto:mennofw@juno.com).

Pastor, Peter Janzen

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## EMU Presidential Search

The EMU Presidential Search Committee, in collaboration with Mennonite Education Agency, seeks nominations and/or applications for the 9th President of Eastern Mennonite University. Candidates should demonstrate these qualities:

- **Christian Faith:** A mature and committed follower of Jesus Christ who embodies and lives Anabaptist practices, demonstrated through commitment to and involvement with a community of faith in the Anabaptism tradition.
- **Proven Leader** who is mission-driven, relational, collaborative, strategic, able to develop resources and entrepreneurial.
- **Education:** Terminal degree, such as Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., D.Min. or M.D.

The new president is expected to assume office between July 1 and December 31, 2016.

Details at [emu.ed/presidential-search](http://emu.ed/presidential-search)

Applications to: [SearchCommittee@MennoniteEducation.org](mailto:SearchCommittee@MennoniteEducation.org)



Kathryn Rodgers, for the EMU Search Committee

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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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