

gospel evangel

connecting the congregations of
indiana-michigan mennonite conference
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Photograph by Beth Smucker

Above: Emery and Mary Holsopple hosted JD Smucker (far right) and family to watch the live streaming of Sunday worship at Waterford.

Living Stream Worship

By **JD Smucker**, Waterford Mennonite Church

It began as an experiment. Our sanctuary was becoming too full for those attending Sunday morning worship. We were not ready to invest in a building project, so we added another worship service before Sunday school (8:00 am Worship, 9:30 Sunday School, and 10:45 Worship). We replaced some benches with chairs for additional seating, which added some breathing room and created a more inviting worship space with room for guests.

The question remained as to how we could stay faithful in our mission to be a welcoming congregation without building a new sanctuary. This led us to wonder, "What if we stream the second service online to encourage a new form of visitation to take place in the homes of those unable to attend on Sunday morning?" We already make

DVDs for those who wish to see the service at a later time. But we could also offer the option of viewing the service live online for those who are on class retreats, are sick, on vacation, or otherwise unable to attend church at Waterford.

This became Living Stream Worship. In addition to the streaming of the service, we invite people from the congregation to view the service with those who are unable to attend. These persons visit as guests in the host home where the service is viewed. With bulletins and song book in hand, the guests provide a living link to the worshipping body as they view the service in the host home. (continued on page 5)

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from the **moderator**

Living into the Peace of Christ

By **Jane Stoltzfus Buller**, Conference Moderator



One of the teachings of Jesus I have been wrestling with the past few weeks is found in Matthew 10:34-39 and Luke 12:49-53, particularly the verses where Jesus says: “Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division” (Luke 12:51) and, “Do not think that I

have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Mt 10:34).

I do not think Jesus is condoning violence or standing with the violent. I believe Jesus is stating what will result from his teaching and ministry—not peace but division—even among families. I believe this because Jesus’ teachings, his life, his death, his resurrection, and the Spirit so graciously given upon his return to God, invites or even demands a lifetime of learning and understanding the measure of Christ. Division happens because we naturally find ourselves at different points of understanding, experience, theological traditions and, well... you fill in the rest.

I have lived this division. Within the circles of my life—family, church, conference, friends—Jesus has been as much a dividing point as the peace which I hold as a true sign of Jesus’ presence among us. As frail and limited human creatures, it seems to be the divisions and the sword that gets the most attention and thus impacts the way of the believer. I consider all the times congregations, conferences or even large national bodies have separated and divided as a violence to the body of Christ. It is not really our hope in Christ.

My vision for the conference the next two years is a vision where we who follow Jesus in IN-MI Conference give more effort and focus to living into the peace of Christ which Jesus has offered. I invite us all to do this in two ways.

One is remaining connected and loving in our relationships, to practice the Matthew 18 invitation when offended or offending, seeking the best of our brothers and sisters in community and forbearing with each other. This includes being curious about other congregations and communities. It includes trusting God’s Spirit within those who are different.

The second is focusing on our missional imagination to tell the good news Jesus is to us through word and action. This good news invites us to be ready to listen rather than judge. It is good news of the liberating goodness God is for all – seeking, forgiving, and transforming. It is good news of salvation from the sword which divides and kills, and salvation toward the peace of losing our lives to find it. It is the good news of Jesus inviting us to be known by “the love we have for one another.”

We as Anabaptist Christians have a tradition of being guided by the Holy Spirit, around the scriptures, a community discerning together the way of Christ. It appears from our own history of division that Jesus has been more of a sword than our peace. I believe Jesus wants to change that in this age. I believe we can truly be a people of peace by focusing on listening and learning from one another EVEN when we find different meanings for the mystery of God in Christ. I have a vision that includes all of us, whether liberal or conservative; evangelical or peace and justice oriented; black or white or gray; blue or red; rural or urban; foreigner or resident; women or men; young or old.

I have a vision: Let us love one another.

This issue is available online:

im.mennonite.net/gospel-evangel



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Pastoral Leadership Team Weekend

The Bible and the People of God

By **Rachel Denlinger**, Communications Coordinator

Over the weekend of November 8-10, 2013, pastors and church leaders gathered for the annual Pastoral Leadership Team Weekend at Amigo Centre. This year's featured speaker was James Krabill, a former Bible teacher in West Africa who currently works with Mennonite Mission Network.

His message centered around the theme, "the Bible and the people of God," covering aspects of reading, interpreting, and internalizing the Bible.

Several participants shared about their experience at the retreat:

"The weekend was a great reminder of the way God has worked with human witnesses to provide a written account of his working in the world. The Bible contains an enormous amount of diversity but remains one story of God's interaction with humanity."

—*Gene Hartman, Emma Mennonite, Conference Moderator-Elect*

"As a church board member, I was afraid that the weekend would be geared solely towards pastors, but it wasn't. It was a rich experience of meeting other Anabaptist believers who were encouraged to look at the Bible with new, creative eyes. It was also good to be able to meet as a Board without other competing things."

—*Robin Tahara Miller, First Mennonite, Middlebury*

"The Holy Spirit was alive at the PLT retreat! James Krabill's exploration of "the Bible and God's people" challenged us to explore the Bible with renewed understanding. His sermon on Sunday, which focused on the beginning of the faith community in Philippi, was riveting. We left feeling as if we were following in the footsteps of those early believers. Our time during "Dwelling in the Word" helped us fully engage the Scriptures."

—*John Powell, Regional Pastor for the Northern Region*



More photos from the weekend can be found on the back cover. (Photographs by Mandy Yoder)

intercultural outreach

Community Policing Forum

By **Gilberto Perez**, Interim Regional Pastor for the Central Region

On Sunday, November 3, 2013, a Community Policing Forum was held at North Goshen Mennonite Church. Bienvenido Community Solutions and the Goshen Community Relations Commission brought together law enforcement officials and congregants for a time of question and answer on issues of community policing with Latino immigrants. There were over 65 persons in attendance.

The purpose of the community policing presentation was for building trust among law enforcement officials and Latino immigrants. The forum was also geared at helping educate the Latino community on the importance of reporting crime or reporting if they have been a victim of a crime.

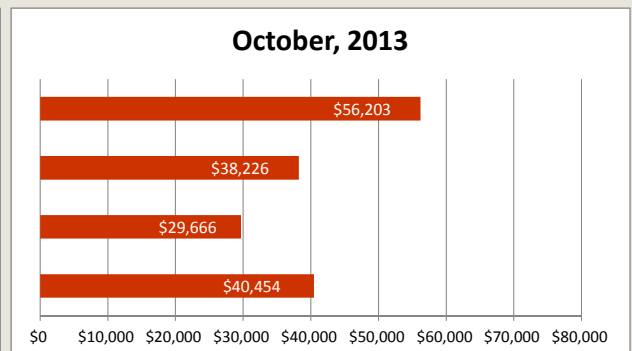
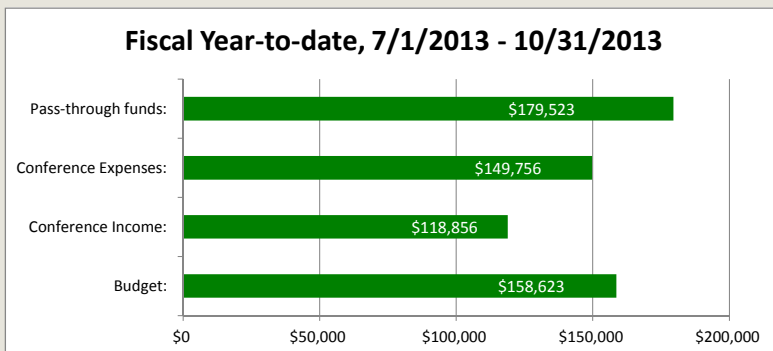
Participants asked questions related to driver's licenses, traffic citations, possible racial profiling, and the importance of filing complaints to law enforcement officials if Latinos feel they have been mistreated. The event allowed participants to hear directly from law enforcement officials on how they go about doing their work with undocumented immigrants.



financial report

By **Greg Leatherman Sommers**, Conference Administrator

A decline in congregational contributions to conference has been nearly offset by increased giving through the Missional Seeds Giving Club, other individuals, and a small increase in other income. For that, we are grateful. As of the end of October, financial support for conference operations totals \$18,500 less this fiscal year than budgeted. Congregational support received has been \$6,500 less than last fiscal year at this time. Expenses during the period were increased by delegate travel to Phoenix, advisory council meeting expenses, advancement expenses, an increase in Gospel Evangel printing costs, and being fully staffed. Conference operations cost \$2,200 less than planned for October, but income was down nearly the same amount. The month ended just \$24.37 over budget. God is good. Please continue to pray for conference, our member churches, and the leaders of each of our congregations.



North Pointe Update

North Pointe Fellowship, formerly River of Life and before that Mennonite Church of Warsaw, closed earlier this year. Their bylaws contained a stipulation that the property be signed over to conference if the church ever closed, and conference accepted the deed of the property in July of 2013.

After some research and deliberation, conference leadership decided to add a restriction to the deed specifying it be used as a church property for at least seven years. We are working with a well-known real estate auction company to get the property into the hands of an active and growing congregation that will continue to serve the Warsaw area for years to come. The sealed bids and auction should be completed by mid-December.

Please keep this process in your prayers. For further information and updates, visit the Conference website (im.mennonite.net) or Facebook page.

Living Stream Worship cont.

(continued from front cover)

My family participated in two visits this past summer. After Sunday School, we hopped in the van and drove to our host's home. We sang, prayed, and felt a part of our congregation via video streaming technology. We talked with our hosts, listened to stories, laughed, and experienced "being church" in a unique way.

This was something new for us: worshipping in the living room of elderly church members on a Sunday morning when we could be worshipping at our church building. We realized that there are people who, after being active in the church for many years, now find themselves unable to attend regularly because of health reasons. They miss being at church. They miss the interaction with people. They miss being a part of the community of faith. There seems to be a Sunday morning void in their lives.

As we left, we discovered that we were the ones given a blessing from our hosts. We were the ones receiving the handshakes and hugs, the words of appreciation and thanks. The overall experience gave us a sense that a personal connection to our congregation made this experience something alive and real. Worship is connected to our relationship with God. We are now even more aware how it is also intertwined with our human relationships.

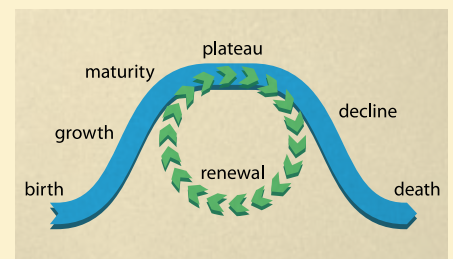


The Smucker family surrounds Emery Holsopple. Clockwise from lower left: Anna, Matthew, Beth, Mary Holsopple, and Andrew.

Embracing the Church Life Cycle

By **Rachel Denlinger**, Communications Coordinator

Just as humans experience a life cycle of birth, growth, and death, so too churches follow a life cycle. In the beginning there is excitement and passion. As a church grows in size, new structures develop to govern and organize church life. A healthy church will reach a level of stability and maturity, perhaps fostering new church plants. At some point, every church will find itself reaching a plateau. From there, the church will either decline or find renewal.



At Annual Sessions earlier this year, we recognized the formal dissolution of North Pointe Fellowship. Within conference, there are other congregations

struggling to stay alive. Some are finding sparks of renewal, while some seem to be going through an extended death. At the same time, we see other churches growing and expanding, on the upward spring of its life cycle.

There is a tendency to view the death of a congregation as a failure, or an indication of wrongdoing or of not doing enough. But death is a natural part of life. If renewal efforts are unsuccessful, death should be embraced graciously. Throughout history, the church has risen and fallen, taken on new forms and gone through various stages of reformation and transformation.

The good news is that death leads to rebirth. Jesus says in John 12:24, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Whether a church falls into decline or finds renewal, both ultimately lead to rebirth. Can we find ways to celebrate this cycle? Can we learn to expect the birth of new things in the absence of old structures? How would recognizing and accepting the church life cycle impact our outlook and decision-making?

As we go forward in an ever-changing landscape, may we learn to embrace the life cycle of the church—whether we find ourselves in the midst of death, growth, or the labor pains of new birth.

at **bethany**

!Exploring Ministry

By **Katie Shank**, Bethany senior

This past summer I participated in !Explore, a ministry inquiry program for high school juniors and seniors at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). The program consisted of two parts: a two-week group experience with eleven other !Explore participants and 100 hours of intern work in my home congregation (East Goshen Mennonite) in which I worked alongside a mentor-pastor to try out our ideas for the church and to apply new things I had learned after my group experience.

During the July 9-24 group experience, we created a tight-knit community that ate, prayed, studied, questioned, served, struggled, discussed, played, and learned together. All of us came with many questions—that exploded into more questions—which we explored together. By the end of our time, we hadn't answered nearly all of our questions, but we had acquired lifelong skills for community building and studying the way of Jesus.

Every morning and every night, we gathered for prayer using *Take Our Moments* and *Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*. I expected this to be boring, dull, and unsatisfying since I prefer talking with people and joking around. However, one night, after a long day of study and service, I realized that I was enjoying the silence during a prayer of intercession. This was new for me. Usually I find silence awkward or too long, but in this moment silence became satisfying. In this second, my being became enough. I didn't have to do anything—I could connect to God by just sitting. Eventually the silence ended as we moved into reading a prayer aloud. Soon I began to value not just the silence, but all parts

of our prayer time. Now yoga, prayer walks, liturgies, and times of silence are all meaningful to me.

Our days were filled with studies and activities. After morning prayers and breakfast, we gathered in small groups to discuss theological questions that each participant brought to AMBS. Then in the evening we researched our theological questions, ate dinner, and attended ministry skills seminars. My favorite part of the day was the afternoon, when we did service at various locations in Elkhart. In the midst of a lot of abstract thought and theology, doing something tangible and getting dirt under my fingernails was a great reminder of what I am sure of: we should serve as Jesus served.

The !Explore program was structured so that we spent a lot of time with each other and became very close. This program helped me learn about ministry, theology, and myself, but the greatest lesson I learned was how to live in community. Together, we learned to hold each other accountable, but still give each other grace. We discovered how to challenge beliefs but accept disagreements, to be vulnerable, yet not nosy, and to live in a way that was enjoyable and beneficial for us all.



Pictured above: current Bethany seniors who participated in the 2013 summer !Explore program: Lynea Brubacher Kaethler (Belmont), Katie Shank (East Goshen), and Ryan Miller (Waterford). Other IN-MI Mennonite Conference participants included Nate Gingerich (Waterford), Jenae Longenecker (Kern Road), and 2013 Bethany grads Maddie Gerig (Assembly) and Josh Leatherman (Holdeman).

Check out the latest issue of Bethany's online student news publication *Sightline* at bc-sightline.net.

Valued, Interdependent, and Learning Together: Introducing Kenzie Intemann

By **Cliff Brubaker**, Amigo Centre Executive Director

When Kenzie Intemann, the new Amigo Centre Youth Program Director, is asked about where his interest in youth programming and camping started, his story begins in Clinton, Oklahoma. On Wednesday nights, his little brother's baby sitter took his brother to the Clinton Mennonite Church. She invited Kenzie, then a kindergartener, to come along and be part of the church's AWANA program for children. Kenzie soon began learning Bible verses and reciting them to the program leaders. He was drawn into the program, to the ways the leaders valued him and others in the program, and to the chance to learn together with other children.

A few years later, as a middle school student, Kenzie and one of his friends helped start a youth group in the church, which until that time did not have one. Working with the adult leaders, Kenzie and his friend invited other friends to be part of the group, which became another place where he felt valued. As the group grew, Kenzie was given opportunity to provide some leadership, helping lead activities and games.

A second thread in Kenzie's story took place on the ropes course and climbing wall at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Kenzie remembers students from his fifth grade class starting on the low ropes course, doing team building exercises, and then ending the day on the high ropes course. The last activity was a walk across a balance beam high above the ground. If he slipped, the only thing that would keep him from falling to the ground far below was the rope that was attached to his harness, held by one of his fellow students on the ground. He remembers the fear that he had as he walked across the beam, and then the exhilaration of making it across. The boy holding the rope was not even a friend at the time, but their experience of being knit together in dependence upon each other was the start of a friendship that endured for years afterward.

Kenzie also remembers being part of a summer camp for youth in Hydro, Oklahoma, first as a camper, and then as leader of the camps during his high school and college years. He fell in love with the energy of the campers and their desire to learn more. "Even though the campers were living in a very rustic setting, and even though the week included a lot of sweat, it was a great week." Later, during his years of undergraduate study (BA, Parks and



Recreation) at Southwestern Oklahoma State, he and a friend began to dream together about creating more opportunities for camping experiences for youth. He later went on to study at Hesston (Kansas) College in the Pastoral Ministries Program

During spring break of his first year at Hesston, Kenzie first experienced Amigo Centre with a group of students from the Pastoral Ministries program. He connected immediately with the setting, particularly the woods, and found kinship with Amigo's slogan, "In Harmony with God and Nature." For Kenzie, whose earlier years had been shaped in Baptist and Presbyterian settings, the Mennonite emphasis on the call to be stewards of God's Creation and to live their faith in community were pieces that matched deep personal commitments in his faith journey. The more he learned about Amigo, the more he sensed that Amigo embodied these personal core commitments.

What are Kenzie's hopes for a young person that comes to Amigo? "I want youth to experience the joy of being in harmony with God and nature, and to be able to do that together with others. I want them to have the opportunity to experience the connections that can happen in a place like this. I hope they will know they are valued and loved. And have the experience of learning to depend on each other, and to learn more about living their faith together."

During Kenzie's first several months here, he will begin to give leadership to Amigo's youth programming and help with maintenance coverage. Alisha Snyder will continue to serve as an intern and work with Kenzie on planning Winter Youth Retreats and recruiting summer staff.

Pastoral Leadership Team Weekend continued

Times of fellowship, discussion, and sharing were a meaningful part of the retreat:



(Photos by Mandy Yoder)

Significant Milestones

On September 14–15, 2013, **First Mennonite of Indianapolis** celebrated its 60th Anniversary.

On September 22, 2013, **Mennonite Fellowship of Bloomington** celebrated its 25th Anniversary.

On October 12–13, 2013, **Clinton Frame Mennonite Church** celebrated its 150th Anniversary.



ministry transitions

Beginnings



Shawn Lange was installed on September 22 as lead pastor at New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship (formerly House of Power), Elkhart, Ind., by Doug Kaufman, conference pastor for leadership transitions.



Tyrone Taylor was installed and licensed on September 22 as associate pastor at New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind., by Doug Kaufman.



On October 13, Doug Kaufman led an ordination recognition ceremony for **M. Elbon Kilpatrick**, a chaplain at Brookwood Medical Centre (Birmingham, Ala.), at First Mennonite of Indianapolis.



Ben Schlegel was ordained on October 13 at Howard-Miami, Kokomo, Ind., by Doug Kaufman.



W. Michael Brudney was installed and licensed as pastor at Lake Bethel, LaGrange, Ind., on November 17 by Doug Kaufman.



M. Frances Ringenberg was ordained as pastor at Prairie Street, Elkhart, Ind., on November 24 by Dan Miller.