



Indiana-Michigan
Mennonite Conference

weLink

connecting the congregations of IN-MI Mennonite Conference

January 13, 2016



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Office closings

The office will be closed January 18 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr holiday.

We are looking for some volunteers willing to cover the front office when Vanessa takes vacation. Please contact the office to inquire.

Celebrating

On Sunday, January 10, Shalom Mennonite celebrated 24 years of pastoral ministry with Dagne Assefa, wife, Carol Weaver, and his family; Regional pastor,

Mary Mininger, referred to his work with the congregation and IN-MI Conference as “A long Obedience in the Same Direction”! (Eugene Peterson)

There were many meaningful words of deep love and appreciation for Dagne’s empowering, servant leadership and pastoral care. Co-pastor, Brian Bither created a list of the top ten learnings from working beside Dagne:

- 10) Be Careful with your words.
- 9) Make Conference a priority.
- 8) Confidentiality comes first.
- 7) Appreciate Beauty and Simplicity.
- 6) Care for people on the margins.
- 5) Warmth diffuses tension.
- 4) Let God be the Judge. (It maintains your sanity.)
- 3) The small stuff matters.
- 2) Empowering others to lead.....AND
- 1) The greatest of these is Love.

Thank you, Dagne, for being the face and feet of the Living Christ in our midst!

Connecting

Delegate meetings are set for March 5 and 12, with a snow date of March 19. Some adjustments have been made in congregational groupings, so check the [website](#) to see whether you will head north to Grand Rapids or south to Kokomo.

December was a short month. Dan and Doug attended area church/conference ministers meeting. It was a different four days of meetings, as we lived into the delegate mandate to imagine outcomes and process for peer reviews, and responded to Executive Board’s request for council on several significant items.

There was one credentialing service. Emily Hostetler was licensed and installed at Yellow Creek Mennonite. No upcoming services are currently

scheduled.

Area Councils have been hearing about “A Framework for Pastoral Growth.” Leadership Enhancement Team is inviting pastors to begin to get acquainted with the process and the six core competencies.

Missional Leadership Team met January 9, continuing conversations about vision for the future. There will be more information on this as delegate meetings get closer.

Mary Mininger represented conference staff at a retirement celebration for Dagne Assefa on January 10. He completed his time as pastor at Shalom, Indianapolis at the end of 2015. We wish him God’s blessing for the transition and the days ahead.

Doug Kaufman began a three-month sabbatical on January 10. He will be studying theology and ecology at the Toronto School of Theology in Ontario as part of pursuing a Masters of Theology. He will be living near his sister’s family. Unfortunately his own family will not be with him. He is excited about this opportunity to learn and grow though he will miss being home. He hopes to have plenty of time to ice skate, with his helmet on. Sharon Yoder is covering in the conference office during Doug’s absence. She will have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Dan will attend the northern Michigan Pastor/Spouse retreat near Petoskey, Michigan later this week, and make some other visits while up there.

Credentialing and Leadership Development

There are no upcoming credentialing services scheduled.

Congregational Updates

The elders at Shore Mennonite Church sent a letter informing us of their congregational vote to withdraw from conference effective immediately. The end

of the year was the time set by Faith Mennonite to become singly affiliated with Central District Conference.

Financial Report

Again we want to thank you for your generous support for the month of December. Our income was \$12,811 above expenses for the month and \$14,590 above expenses for the year to date. In these times of uncertainty it is a gift from the Lord that you stand with us to serve in this way.

Jim Norton



Constituency Leaders Council report

Paula Killough, Shannon Dycus and Dan Miller attended the Constituency Leaders Council meeting in October at Sauder Village in Archbold, Ohio October 19-21. You can access two reports on the event at

[Mennonite Church USA](#) and in [The Mennonite](#). Shannon shares these extra reflections on behalf of herself and Paula:

One of the phrases that stood out for me in our gathering of CLC was someone who shared “Emotions are often the first to arrive at the table and the last to heal.” This was an emotional gathering, each of us arriving with differing forms of brokenness and at varied stages of healing. Each conference submitted a report and the themes emerged included: movement, uncertainty, KC resolutions, loyalty, loss, and commitment. Holding it all, we sought healing together through harmonies and Biblical reflections, silence and broken bread, difficult truths and energizing discernment. Our listening committee gave us several reminders as we concluded our meeting that are helpful as we acknowledge brokenness and

seek healing for our conference: Don't be afraid, God's love endures forever. These are challenging times. Tend our joy.

Looking Ahead: Study Ephesians

Allegheny Conference invites you to study Ephesians with Tom Yoder Neufeld, April 25-28, 2016. This is their annual spring study held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. See <http://www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org> for more details.

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/.

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