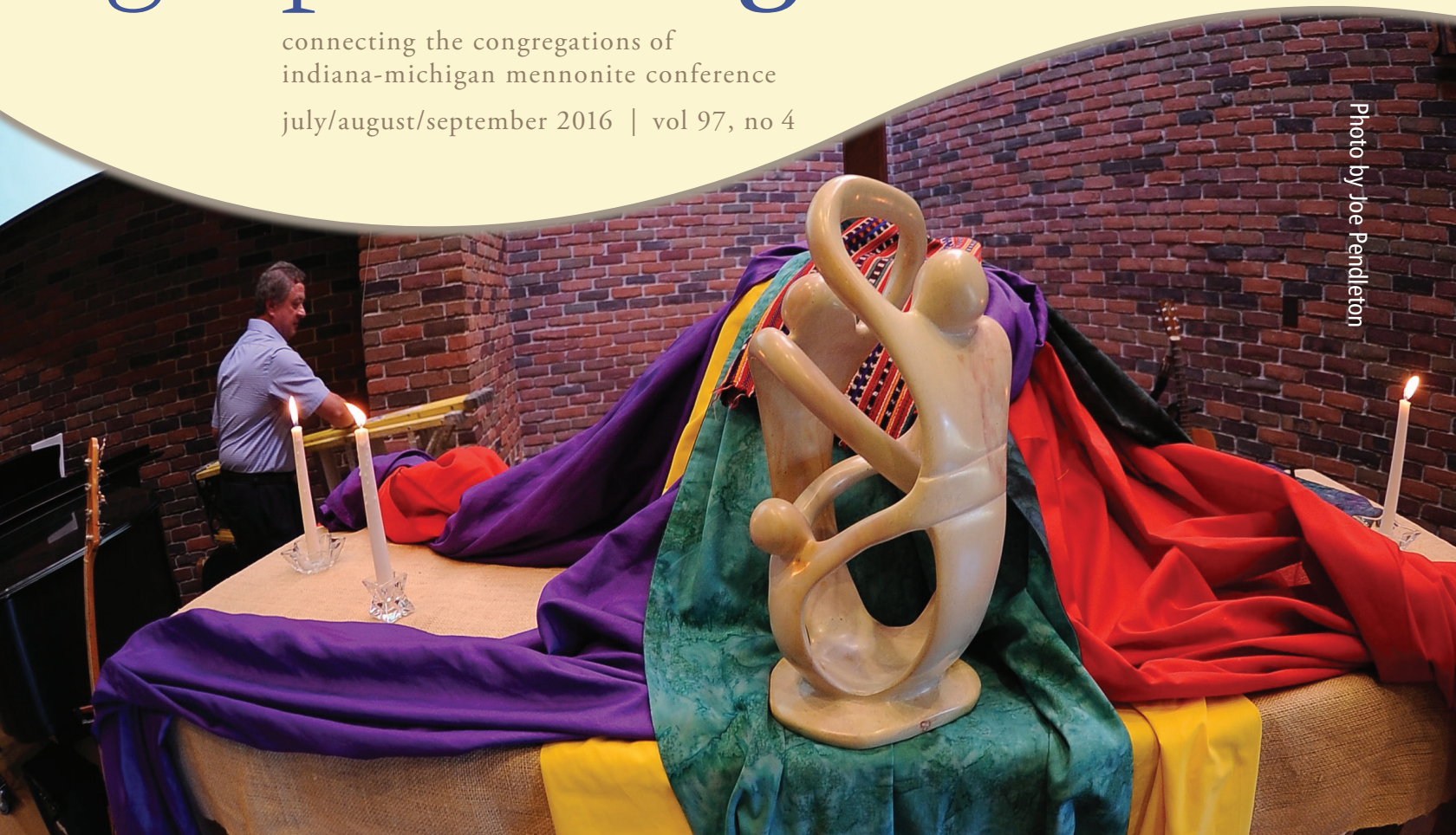


gospel evangel

connecting the congregations of
indiana-michigan mennonite conference

july/august/september 2016 | vol 97, no 4

Photo by Joe Pendleton



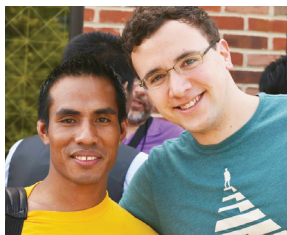
IN-MI Conference's Annual Sessions' participants enjoy worship in the Sermon on the Mount Chapel at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Restoring God's kingdom joy

Renewing a right spirit in worship, stories, friendships

Indiana-Michigan Conference's Annual Sessions this year weren't simply a gathering. They were a communion of persons who sought God's grace to create clean hearts and right spirits within a diverse mosaic of congregations. The communion included worshiping in various styles, storytelling of God's faithfulness and the bonding of cross-cultural friendship during the sessions.

"Create in me a clean heart,
O God, and put a new and
right spirit within in me."
—Psalm 51:10



From left, Eric Lian, Mara Christian Church, and Lane Miller, Kern Road; Paula Killough, Prairie Street/member of Missional Leadership Team (MLT) and Russell Jensen, Belmont; Cora Brown, Church Without Walls, Dan Miller, conference pastor and George Thompson, MLT. Photos by Joe Pendleton

They were held June 16-18 on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. In the inside photo essay, you are invited to join the journey of participants whose spirits were renewed in God.

(continued on pages 2-3)

inside

2 Restoring kingdom joy

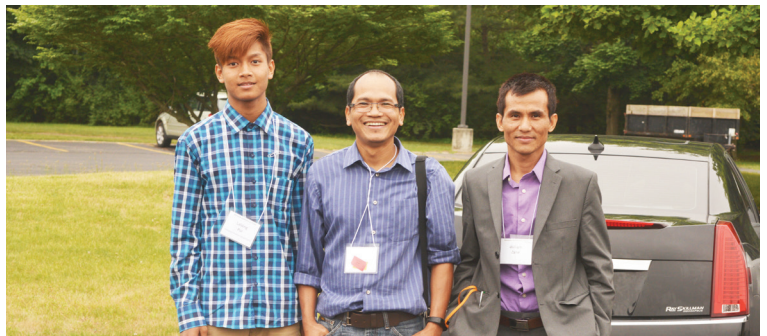
3 Restoring continued

4 Journeying with our pastors

restoring kingdom joy



These photos, by Joe Pendleton, pastor of Bethel Mennonite, depict how fellowship and worship at Annual Sessions bonded people in Christ. From left to right, clockwise: 1. Dave Sutter, Kern Road, enjoys a laugh with Les Gnagey, Hudson Lake. 2. Vanessa Kellybrew, IN-MI office manager, and Marty Bender, Prairie Street, enjoy friendship. 3. From left, Lalding Pui, Jeremiah Chuiha and William Zahe of Emmanuel Christian Living Church attend the sessions together to explore possible conference membership. 4. Laura Lehman, director of admissions at Eastern Mennonite University, is offered a chili popsickle. 5. Lora Nafziger, Assembly, has a mommy moment with her son, Auggie.



This issue is available online:

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Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference—a conference of **Mennonite Church USA**—is a community of congregations in Indiana, Michigan and Kentucky, gathered together for mutual encouragement in kingdom mission and inspiration to joyfully follow Jesus.

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restoring kingdom joy



From left to right, clockwise:
1. Jon and Cora Brown, Church Without Walls, unite in worship with Shawn Lange, New Foundation United in Christ.
2. Attendees participate in communion.
3. From left, Barb Christophel, Holdeman, and Sandy Richard, Olive, chat on a bench on the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) campus.
4. Nelson Kraybill, Prairie Street, gives a presentation.
5. Jane Stoltzfus Buller, Walnut Hill, and Mary Mininger, IN-MI regional pastor, connect between sessions.
6. Sara Wenger Shenk, Prairie Street/AMBS president, worships in the Sermon on the Mount Chapel.



journeying with our pastors



Dan Miller, IN-MI conference pastor, reflects on Annual Sessions, held June 16-18 on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.



Delegates and others met in Elkhart, Ind., on June 16-18 to worship, confer, fellowship and learn at the Annual Sessions of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Some events are so disconnected from the location in which they are held that the event could be moved anywhere else and be exactly the same. But the Elkhart planners guided us in understanding how the spirit is working in the joys and struggles of their place. **Thank you to pastors Cora Brown, Jon Brown, Suella Gerber, Russell Jensen, Nelson Kraybill, Shawn Lange, Frances Ringenberg, Larry Rohrer, Mandy Yoder and Terry Zehr!**

Other highlights included a vote to receive the Mara Christian Church of America congregation in Indianapolis as a member congregation; introduction of Emmanuel Christian Living Church who is applying for membership; release of the conference history book written by Rich Preheim, *In Pursuit of Faithfulness*; Alan Kreider's presentation on "patient ferment" in the early church; and delegate discussions about the "Renewing a Vision" covenant. It proposes centering conference life around Jesus and engaging in spiritual practices that allow Christ's Spirit to shape us to be like Jesus.

We also recognized the departure of congregations that closed or withdrew during the year. Worship leaders and preachers helped us connect our disappointments and hopes to God in singing, shouting, praying, laughing and listening.

Photos on these pages capture some of the energy and excitement of the gathering. Thanks to **Joe Pendleton**, pastor at Bethel Mennonite, who faithfully took pictures throughout the weekend.

Don't miss next year's gathering **June 15-17, 2017** hosted by the SwaNee Lake Area Council. Between now and then let's live into our vision and see where God takes us!

ministry transitions

Beginnings



Delegates acted on June 16 to accept the Indianapolis, Ind., congregation of Mara Christian Church of America as a member congregation. Four leaders from the congregation were present, from left: Chha Cho, David Ngoletha, Ang Rem and Eric Lian. On June 12 in Indianapolis, Dan Miller, conference pastor, commissioned Rem as pastor of the four congregations (Indianapolis, Atlanta, Baltimore, and Charlotte) of the Mara Christian Church.



Wilma Cender, right, was licensed as a minister of faith formation by Doug Kaufman on June 12 at Valparasio (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Gary Martin, left, was installed as transitional pastor May 22 at Shalom Mennonite Church in Indianapolis by Doug Kaufman.



Steve Thomas, below, marked his last day as transitional pastor May 1 at First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis.



Brent Siegrist, above, marked his last day as associate pastor June 19 at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.