

gospel evangel

connecting the congregations of
indiana-michigan mennonite conference

july/ august/ september 2021 | vol 102, no 1



Delegates, pastors, exhibitors and staff of IMMC gather at Amigo Centre for Annual Sessions. Dan Miller talks with Eric Lian (Mara Christian Church of America, Indianapolis, IN).

Becoming One

Members of IMMC gather online and in-person for Annual Sessions 2021

By: Anna Board, editor



Muthoni (Gladys) Maina (Morning Star, Muncie, IN) blesses the communion bread.

Pastors, delegates and their family members gathered over Zoom and in-person at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, MI on June 18th and 19th for Annual Sessions 2021. The theme, "Becoming One" comes out of Ephesians 4:1-6 and speaks to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference's desire to be united in Christ.

Thomas Hill (Community Christian Fellowship, Detroit, MI), Muthoni Maina (Morning Star Ministries, Muncie, IN), and Shawn Lange (New Foundation United in Christ, Elkhart, IN).

Planners this year were Wanda Bradford (Community Christian Fellowship, Detroit, MI), Jeremiah Chuiha (Emmanuel Living Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN), Shawn Lange (New Foundation United in Christ, Elkhart, IN), Muthoni Maina (Morning Star Ministries, Muncie, IN), and Izaete Nafziger (North Goshen, Goshen, IN).

Attendees participated in seminars by Karla Minter and Marvin Lorenzana (Missional Discipleship Initiative), Dr. Dorothea Foster (Insights into Grief), and Nekeisha Alayna Alexis (Intercultural Competency).

Inside you will find a photo gallery from Annual Sessions 2021. Enjoy these snapshots from a weekend of learning about "Becoming One".

Sermon recordings and photos available at im.mennonite.net.

IMMC is a diverse conference with individuals of many different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and experiences. Like many pieces of different fabric, the sisters and brother of IMMC are stitched together by the love and goodness of Jesus to create a beautiful quilt.

Attendees heard stories from a variety of congregations throughout IMMC. Contributors were Rachel Yoder (Parkview, Ft Wayne), Elder

inside

2 & 3 **Becoming one** cont'd
4 **Journeying** with our pastors

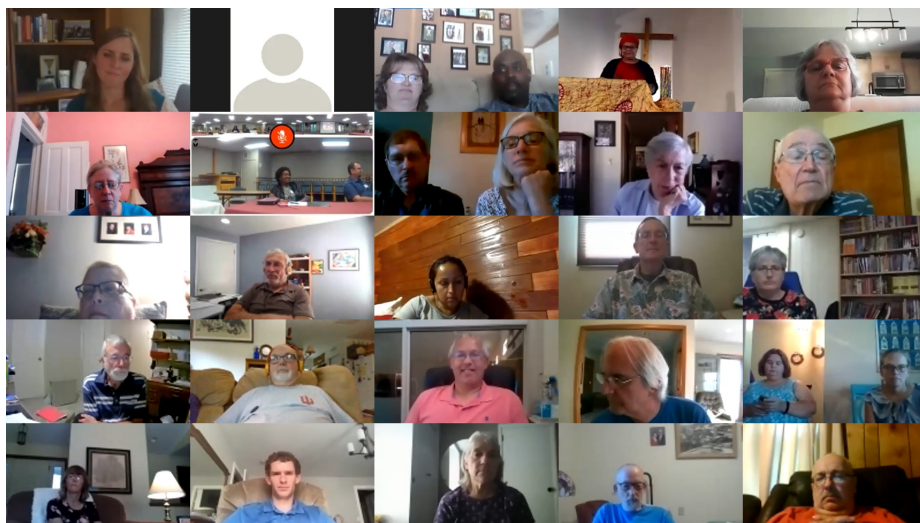
(continued on page 2)

Becoming one



Clockwise from L to R: 1. Izaete Nafziger of North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN lights a candle to begin worship. 2. Shawn Lange of New Foundation United in Christ Fellowship, Elkhart, IN shares a congregational story.

3. Naomi Yoder of East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN; Anna Board of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, Izaete Nafziger, Bj Leichty of Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, IN and Marj Rush Hvide of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis gather over Zoom. 4. Participants gather over Zoom. 5. Sue Sommer of North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN and Leandrea Lange of New Foundation, Elkhart, IN share scripture in sign language and in English. 6. Jeremiah Chuiha of Emmanuel Living Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN shares a congregational story on Saturday morning.



"Yo pues, preso en el Señor, os ruego que andéis como es digno de la vocación con que sois llamados; Con toda humildad y mansedumbre, con paciencia soportando los unos á los otros en amor; Solícitos á guardar la unidad del Espíritu en el vínculo de la paz. Un cuerpo, y un Espíritu; como sois también llamados á una misma esperanza de vuestra vocación: Un Señor, una fe, un bautismo, Un Dios y Padre de todos, el cual es sobre todas las cosas, y por todas las cosas, y en todos vosotros." **Ephesios 4:1-6**

Becoming one



"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ **making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵ **one Lord, one faith, one baptism**, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."
Ephesians 4:1-6



Clockwise from L to R: 1. Izaete Nafziger, Brenda Meyer, and Chris Kauffman fellowship with one another at Amigo Centre. 2. Attendees gather in the pavilion at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI on Saturday morning for worship. 3. Brenda Meyer and Bob Yoder of the Missional Leadership Team (MLT); Cindy Steiner, chair of the Stewardship Team, presents a check to John Buschert of Benton Mennonite Church for the Capital Grant. 4. Dan Miller of IMMC and member of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church preaches during Saturday morning worship

journeying with our pastors



Brenda Meyer, IMMC moderator, reflects Annual Sessions 2021 and on her new role as moderator.

Dan Miller turned a disappointment into a win when the Elkhart pastor’s group asked to delay hosting Annual Sessions until 2022. Dan invited pastors of color to plan the 2021 sessions, and office administrator Anna Board to coordinate. What a gift!

In zoom on Friday and in-person on Saturday, these leaders engaged us with worship that moved from laughter to tears, from story to prayer, from lament to gratitude. For the first time we had translators working to make the worship and business accessible to people whose primary language is Spanish or Mara. The spirit of unity in diversity as we worshiped together put flesh on the theme of Becoming One and made our conversation about intercultural competency goals more than just an exercise. Lovely weather added to the energy of our meeting in the Amigo pavilion, along with the joy of being together in person.

On Saturday afternoon outgoing moderator Bob Yoder announced a 97% positive vote to bring Joanne Gallardo on as Conference Co-Minister alongside Sharon Yoder. As I begin my moderator term I am excited about the experiences and perspectives that Sharon and Joanne each bring to our new model. In my twenty-plus years as a co-pastor I have seen the energy and growth that a dynamic co-relationship can make possible.

I am thankful for Dan Miller’s gentle way of shepherding us through hard times in the past twelve years, and his persistent pointing to the work of the Spirit among us. I believe his leadership has created space for the energy and hope we experienced last weekend. Centered on Jesus and trusting the continued guidance of Spirit, I look forward to more laughter and tears, lament and gratitude, prayer, and stories of God at work. I’m glad to be here.

ministry transitions

Beginnings & Endings



Phil Schmidt, above, was installed at Belmont Mennonite Church on April 25, 2021.



Jen Helmuth Shenk, above, was ordained at Kern Road Mennonite Church on May 2, 2021.



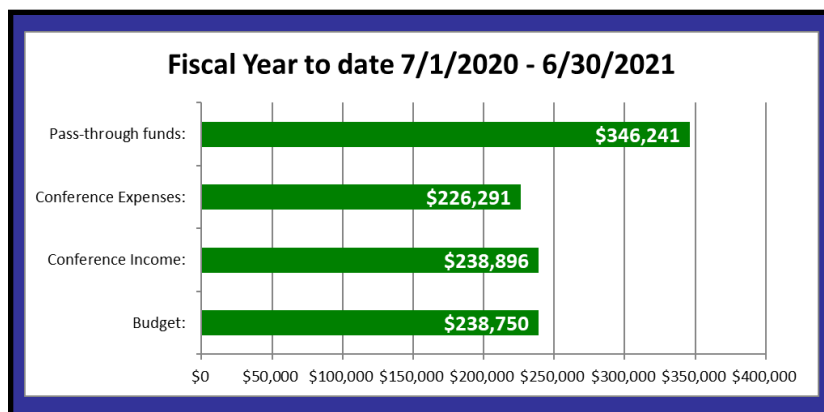
Steve Slagel, above, began as transitional pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church on May 29, 2021.



Mag and Bob Richer Smith, left, ended as bridge pastors at First Mennonite, Indianapolis on June 30, 2021.



Frances Ringenberg, left, concluded her time as sabbatical pastor at East Goshen Mennonite Church on May 1, 2021



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.

Mailing Address: PO Box 702, Goshen, IN 46527
(574) 534-4006 or im.mennonite.net

Missional Leadership Team Members: Brenda Meyer, moderator, Goshen, IN; Steve Slagel moderator-elect, Traverse City, MI; Bob Yoder, post-moderator, Goshen, IN; Naomi Yoder, Goshen, IN; Duane Yoder, treasurer, Ft. Wayne, IN.

Gospel Evangel is published four times annually by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite

Conference (Jan/Feb/Mar, Apr/May/Jun, Jul/ Aug/ Sept, Oct/Nov/Dec. It is printed and mailed by Duley Press, 2906 N. Home Street, Mishawaka, IN 46545. Periodical postage is paid at Nappanee, IN 46550 (USPS 575-940). Postmaster: Send address changes to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, PO Box 702, Goshen, IN 46527.

Editor: Anna Board, administrative coordinator
Email: imoffice@im.mennonite.net

We invite you to submit articles and article ideas.

Printed on 30% PCW recycled paper.

This issue is available online: [im.mennonite.net/ gospel-evangel](http://im.mennonite.net/gospel-evangel)