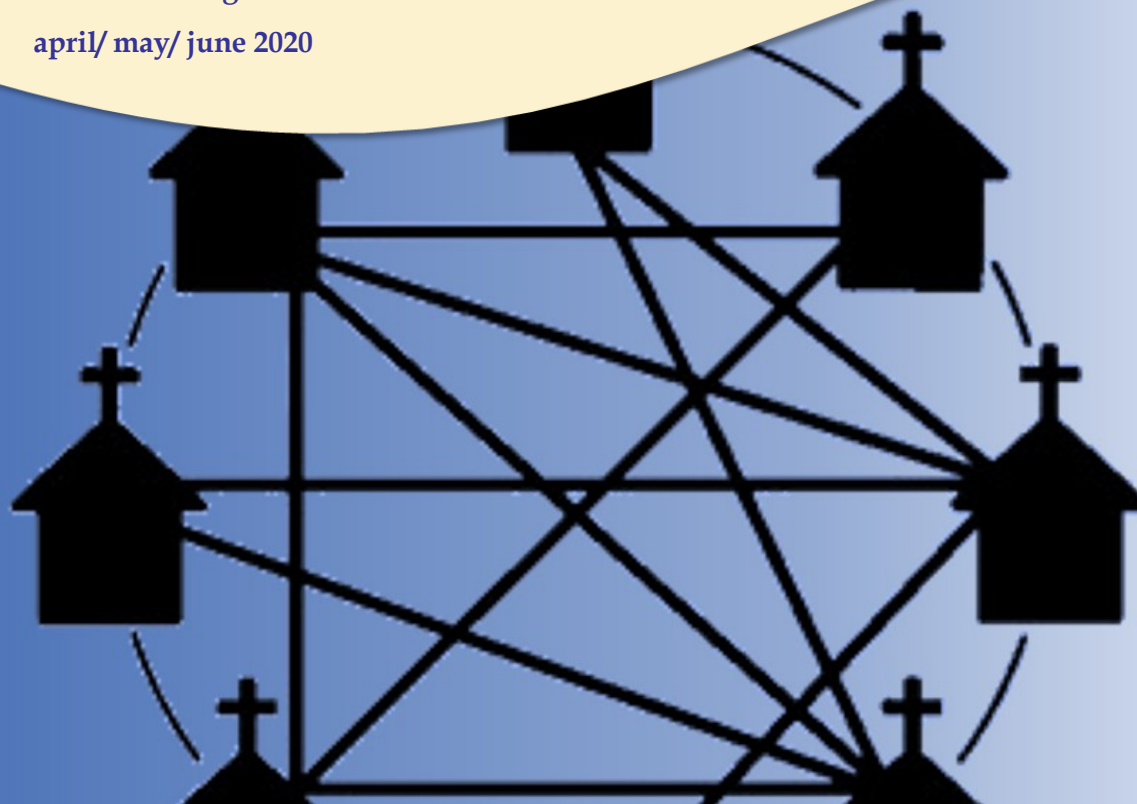


gospel evangel

connecting the congregations of
indiana-michigan mennonite conference

april/ may/ june 2020



Conference Sunday

Stories of connection and God's faithfulness

By: Anna Board, editor

The Stewardship Team and staff of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference invited member congregations to set aside Sunday, February 23rd to participate in a Conference Sunday. Congregations shared stories, read scriptures aloud, and sang joyful songs celebrating God's faithfulness to this community of congregations.



Doug Kaufman, Benton Mennonite Church, (Goshen, IN)

Being apart of a conference that stretches nearly 900 miles north to south, it is easy to feel disconnected from one another. Telling stories connects people across miles and cultures. They remind us that we are not alone, and that there are thousands (over 5000) of sisters and brothers are part of this journey together.

Each church received a resource packet full of suggestions for worship and

Christian education hour. The packet included links to IMMC's *Renewing a Vision* video and to a PowerPoint containing photos from every IMMC congregation. Because there were more elements than could fit in one service, planners were able to choose which parts they thought would be meaningful to their congregation.

Some chose to incorporate the John F. Funk monologue into their worship service or Sunday school time. This monologue, written by Veronica Weirich Berkey (College Mennonite, Goshen, IN), is a detailed account of Funk's life and involvement in laying the foundation for what would later become Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Church. Doug Kaufman (left), a pastor at Benton Mennonite (Goshen, IN), performed this monologue for congregants who found it to be a particularly delightful experience.

Delegates were encouraged to share

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Conference Sunday



Vernard Guengerich, Holdeman Mennonite Church (Wakarusa, IN)

what IMMC participation has meant to them. Vernard Guengerich (Holdeman Mennonite, Wakarusa, IN), shared how a *Gospel Evangel* article that he read in 1969 inspired him to become a credentialed pastor. For over 50 years, he has been a part of congregations throughout IMMC, including eleven years as pastor at Wayside Mennonite Church in the Upper Peninsula.

Vernard recounted ways that Holdeman and IMMC have supported

him and his family. He states, "Conference provided time at Camp Amigo twice without cost for the pastors and families who were serving the small churches in Conference

then. Those were some of the very few vacations we had during the 11 years we were in the UP. Our children still talk about those times."



(Right to left) Sunday Mahaja, Benton Mennonite Church (Goshen, IN); Janice Wagner leads children's time at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Engadine MI.

Vernard, the different

training opportunities like the Explore!, a summer program for high school seniors offered through IMMC and AMBS, and IMMC events have helped him feel connected to with the IMMC community. "My attendance at Annual Sessions...has made it possible for me to learn to know people from other places and see how God is at work in those places," says

Vernard, "So now when I read the *Gospel Evangel*, I know some of the people and have been in some of the places that are mentioned."

Wildwood Mennonite Church (Engadine, MI) invited Dan Miller to be with them on Conference Sunday. Dan preached on the friendship between Paul and the church in Philippi.

Ty Elenbaas, a member of the Wildwood congregation shared his thoughts. "Through his sermon, [Dan] made the correlation of the importance of the friendships that could and should exist between our churches. I was encouraged to consider what this might look like for us. I think the vulnerability required

can be intimidating, yet ultimately beautiful." Worship leader Leighton Miller included prayers from several congregations across conference he had contacted for requests.

Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship (Elkhart, IN) incorporated the PowerPoint presentation of congregations during their offering time. As the conference staff present with them that evening, it was a joy to hear members of the congregation exclaim every time they recognized a familiar face on the screen.



Youth from Benton Mennonite Church (Goshen, IN) participate in a children's sermon.



Snack time for youth at New Foundation United in Christ Fellowship (Elkhart, IN).

This issue is available online:

im.mennonite.net/gospel-evangel



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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Youth Creation Care Summit

Youth learn and practice the theology behind creation care

By: Anna Board, editor



June 28- July 3, 2020, youth groups and youth leaders from across Elkhart County will gather at Goshen College, Goshen, IN for the inaugural Youth Creation Care Summit.

This exciting, weeklong event is the culmination of work done by environmental leaders and Mennonite

pastors who are passionate about the integration of creation care and theology.

The idea for the Youth Creation Care Summit came from Ben Bouwman, pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Elkhart, IN. About two years ago, Ben reached out to local pastors and environmental leaders sharing his vision for an event that would be for youth and that would incorporate creation care, education, worship and service. Amy Kratzer, Sunnyside Mennonite Church, and Daniel Yoder, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, joined Ben and others in turning this vision into a reality.

Bowman stumbled across curriculum developed by former AMBS students, Rianna and Benni Issak-Krauss while they were

participating in the Sustainability Leadership Semester at Merry Lea. This curriculum provides resources for worship services and educational sessions and inspired much of the content for this event. Youth will explore the ways followers of Jesus are called to care for creation.

The students who attend the Youth Creation Care Summit will experience times of both learning and serving. According to Bouwman, students will be placed in groups that will complete work projects around the community.

This important work comes at just the right time. Ben states, "Many are rediscovering a healthy theology of creation, believing the Bible has much to say about the earth that God lovingly created, and what it means to be its caretakers. The entire experience is intentionally designed to consider the many facets of our lives and how they impact the environment around us, whether this be the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the way we travel, or the way we heat and cool our homes. Everything we do shapes the world around us."

The planners for this event are hopeful that the impact of this summit will be felt throughout the community. Amy Kratzer shares, "These kids are already living in this community as contributing members and many will remain here as adults. Interacting with local leaders in the field of creation care, seeing what is already happening and getting our hands dirty to help will enliven their imaginations as they continue to shape their lives and values around the ideas of creation care."

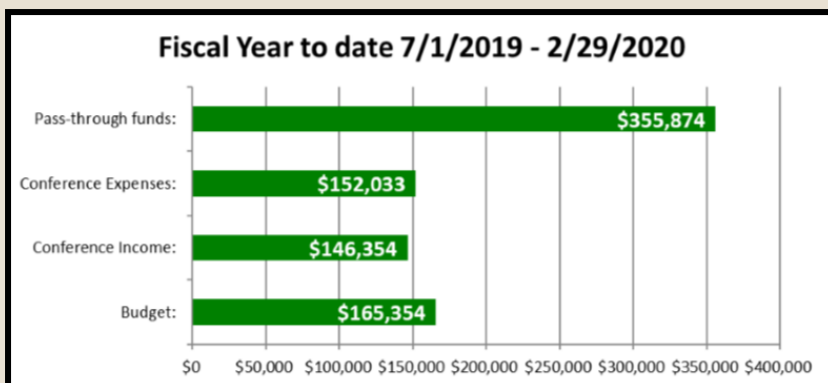
Kratzer and Bouwman invite congregations to pray for all those attending and planning the Youth Creation Care Summit. They recognize that it is through the power of the Holy Spirit alone that hearts and minds can be changed by this experience.

To learn more about the inspiration for the summit or to access the Issak-Krauss' curriculum, please visit: <https://mennocreationcare.org/youth-creation-care-summit-shares-its-curriculum/>.

financial report

By Jim Norton, IMMC treasurer
Most recent financial report

The income for February was \$5,980 below budget for the month and \$19,000 below expectations for the year. Expenses were \$3,603 above income for the month and \$5,679 above income for the year.



journeying with our pastors



Dan Miller, IMMC pastor, tells about his experiences with our visitors from Tanzania.

Two guests from Tanzania visited Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) on March 10-18. Bishop Rwanda Chris Kateti and Mr. Simon Songe visited from Shirati Diocese of Tanzania Mennonite Church (KMT). Bishop Kateti has invited IMMC to develop a relationship with Shirati Diocese.

It was a meaningful time. Some of the best days for me were conversations between our guests and the Tanzania Affinity Group. We learned about one another personally, as we shared. For example, Bishop Kateti is widely respected as a leader with integrity. Prior to becoming a bishop, he taught at the Bible college at Musoma and worked ten years with the Tanzania Bible Society. Simon Songe leads the finance department at Shirati Hospital. He was involved with youth department at the diocesan level and currently leads the youth department at the KMT level. In Swahili, the word translated youth means "those with energy" and the department targets those twelve to 40 years old!

As they first arrived we were actively seeing many people and planning for delegate meetings; but by the end we were cancelling events faster than they were

planned. As the COVID-19 situation kept evolving we all decided they should head home early. I regret that delegate meetings needed to be cancelled. Resources about the Tanzania



Bishop Kateti and Mr. Simon Songe explore shops and restaurants in downtown Goshen.

recommendation are on the Conference website.

Special thanks to the Tanzania Affinity Group, for helping make this visit happen: Chairperson Bess Fitzgerald (Kalamazoo) was the main organizer, Dick and Nancy Yoder (Berkey Avenue) hosted the guests in their home; David Miller (Prairie Street) provided transportation, Leighton Miller (Wildwood) reported to the south delegate meeting.

ministry transitions

Beginnings & Endings



Bob and Mag Richer Smith above, were installed as interim co-pastors at First Mennonite, Indianapolis on January 12, 2020.



Cyneatha Millsap, above, was installed at Prairie Street Mennonite Church as co-pastor on March 1, 2020.



Quinn Brenneke, above, was installed at Prairie Street Mennonite Church as co-pastor on March 1, 2020.



Gary Martin, above, concluded transitional ministry at First Mennonite, Indianapolis on December 31, 2019.



Steve Thomas above, completed transitional ministry at Prairie Street Mennonite Church on December 31, 2019.



Carolyn Hunt above, completed her pastorate at Prairie Street Mennonite Church on December 31, 2019.



The Goshen Regional Council is excited to welcome you to Annual Sessions 2020, **June 18-20**. Guest preacher and presenter Safwat Marzouk, along with our theme verses (Eph.2:1-11), will challenge us to consider how God is "building together" the varied people and congregations of a newly emerging Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.