



June 2009

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Ohio Evangel

NEWS & VIEWS OF OHIO CONFERENCE MENNONITES

Pastors share experiences of crossing divisions

By Mary E. Klassen

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS) — Imagine the stories emerging in a group that includes African-American pastors, pastors originally from Africa now serving in the U.S., a Hispanic pastor, Caucasian pastors who became Mennonites as adults, and a mix of seminary students, staff and faculty members.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Engaging Pastors program hosted this gathering on April 30 so the pastors could talk about how they see God at work and so that AMBS staff and faculty could learn more about ministry in diverse contexts. The evening began with stories from three pastors who were at AMBS on sabbatical: Angela Nze from Christ Life Chapel, Avondale, Ariz.; Horace McMillon from Open Door Mennonite Church, Jackson, Miss.; and an Ohio Conference pastor, **Samuel Olarewaju** from Berean

Fellowship, Youngstown, Ohio. Two pastors of churches in Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference also shared: Maria Crockett from House of Power and Cora Brown from Church Without Walls.

These pastors shared stories about how the congregations they serve deal with diversity within the congregation as well as in their neighborhoods. One story that caught the attention of the group was Crockett's story about using a donkey to break down barriers. She described how the homes around the church in the southwest part of



Samuel Olarewaju, pastor of Berean Fellowship in Youngstown, shares experiences of ministry in settings of diversity with Loren L. Johns, Bible professor, at an Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary event April 30. Olarewaju was at AMBS on sabbatical and participated in an evening of sharing with other pastors and with seminary faculty and students. Photo by J. Tyler Klassen.

Elkhart have fences, signs for no trespassing and dogs to discourage people from coming to the doors. So **Continued on page 5**

Marilyn Rossiter to speak at OMW Retreat

Ohio Mennonite Women's 40th Annual Retreat will be held at Camp Luz Sept. 18-20, 2009. All women are invited to come for a time of refreshment for body, soul and mind in a peaceful camp setting.

Marilyn Rossiter will be the speaker, focusing on the theme "Make Me an Instrument: Tuning in to Jesus Christ."

Marilyn Rossiter is a musician, wife, mother, and grandmother from the Kidron Mennonite Church, where she currently serves as minis-

ter of music. Being born in Wayne County, Ohio, and marrying her high school sweetheart doesn't mean that Marilyn has always chosen the traditional way. She and Hank have done three stints of mission work during their 35-year marriage and recently they helped start a girls' school in Monrovia, Liberia. Their focus is to follow Christ in a counter-cultural fashion. This has led them to Liberia and back, both quitting well-estab-

Continued on page 5



Marilyn Rossiter

Encouraging a spirit of giving

Each spring for the past several years, my congregation, Beech Mennonite, has held a rummage sale. The proceeds usually benefit several projects, including the child care center operated in our church building. Many people who otherwise would never visit our church come to buy rummage items, baked goods and plants.

I am always amazed at how many things people in our congregation donate for this sale, and the variety of items represented. At one point a few years ago, I thought, "We've been doing this sale for years now. What unused or un-

wanted items could people possibly have left that they haven't already donated?"

Why is it that I underestimate the willingness of people to give? Granted, many of the items which are donated to our rummage sale are things which are no longer precious to the giver, which makes them easier to give. Still, year after year, many people in our congregation are doing more than just getting rid of things they no longer want. They willingly make the effort to grow plants, make baked goods, and spend numerous hours arranging items for

the sale, not to mention cleaning up afterward.

In our current economic climate, it's easy to develop a scarcity mentality. When we wonder whether jobs are secure, it can be tempting to hold on to every single thing we have. And yet, I don't think God is calling us to act this way. It's not that I think we are called to spend without counting the cost; however, I do think that no matter how little we have, we still need to think about ways that we can give.

— ahl

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Summer issue of *Leader* focuses on the early church



By Norma Duerksen
Ohio Conference Resource Advocate

Check this summer's issue of *Leader* maga-

zine for worship resources on "Letters to the Early Churches." Each Sunday takes a glimpse into the early church. At that time everyone was new to the faith in God through Jesus Christ. All were working out what that faith meant and how to live it out. By studying these letters, we learn the process of how

to determine and live out faith in our own time and place.

An added plus is that these worship resources connect to the summer *Gather 'Round* Sunday school materials. But even if your church doesn't use *Gather 'Round*, each week's worship guide includes hymn suggestions, children's stories, and "sermon seeds." It makes summer worship planning a whole lot easier. It is also a constructive way to preach from something other than the gospels. Key concepts of faith have already been sorted out for you.

If you have questions about what resources are available from Mennonite agencies, please contact Norma Duerksen at pnduerksen@aol.com.

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Churches celebrate new ties with OC



Chestnut Ridge marked its transition to membership in the Ohio Conference on Sunday, March 29. Pictured are (left to right) Loren and Earlene Horst, Conference Minister Tom Kauffman and Regional Pastor Andy Stoner. Loren Horst served as Chestnut Ridge's overseer for the Virginia Conference for the last several years and grew up at Chestnut Ridge.

The two churches which joined the Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA at this year's Annual Conference Assembly in March marked the change in conference affiliation in special ceremonies during Sunday morning worship services.

On March 29 Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church in Orrville held a special worship service marking the congregation's transition from membership in Virginia Mennonite Conference to the Ohio Conference. Loren Horst, who had served as Chestnut Ridge's overseer in the



Participating in the "Release and Blessing Service" at First Mennonite Church in Berne, Ind., were (left to right) John Rohrer, Ohio Conference moderator; Tom Kauffman, Ohio Conference minister; Rod Lehman, First Mennonite Church Moderator; Lois Kaufmann, Central District Conference minister; and Gordon Oyer, Central District Conference president.

Virginia Conference, spoke about remembering and honoring faith in the past. Jim Ziegler spoke about the process the congregation followed in deciding to become a part of the Ohio Conference. Finally, Conference Minister Tom Kauffman and Regional Pastor Andy Stoner spoke about reaching with faith toward the future.

On May 10 First Mennonite Church in Berne held a "Release and Blessing" service during the morning worship service, recognizing the congregation's transition from membership in the Central District Conference to the Ohio Conference. The congregation read a litany, and words were shared by two representatives of Ohio Conference (Conference Minister Tom Kauffman and Conference Moderator John Rohrer) and Central District Conference (Central District Conference Minister Lois Kaufmann and Central District Conference President Gordon Oyer). Central District Conference presented Ohio Conference with a special candle holder to commemorate this event. The candle holder was then passed on to First Mennonite Church.

Luz hosts Hispanic Retreat



Camp Luz hosted the Hispanic Retreat May 1-3.

The Hispanic Retreat of May 1-3 brought together Hispanics from Mennonite churches in the state of Ohio. Raul Tadeo served as the coordinator of the event. This was the 5th Hispanic Retreat held at Camp Luz. The theme of the weekend was "God is our Hope." Messages and group discussion focused on that topic and on the scripture Isaiah 40:28-31. There were separate and special pro-

grams geared toward youth and children.

The group was made up of families from Iglesia Cristiana of Columbus, Brazo en Brazo of Lima and Open Arms Hispanic Ministry of Wayne County. There were 116 adults youth and children registered, plus visitors. These families represented Mexico and countries of Central America and South America.

Preparing Sunday Dinner provides insight and tools for worship planners

By Robin Walton

Preparing Sunday Dinner: A Collaborative Approach to Worship and Preaching by June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough, Herald Press, 2006.

You have heard it said, “We are what we eat.” *Preparing Sunday Dinner* uses the metaphor to show us that just as food is good and vital for our bodies, worship is good and vital for our souls, individual and communal.

This book was written in the context of the Mennonite Church as a collaboration of its three authors, all of whom have taught worship-related topics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and have made other significant contributions

to whom?” and then thoughtfully directing each action in worship either toward God or toward each other.

Preparing Sunday Dinner differentiates between sharing of joys and concerns and testimony. Sharing is about us, told to the congregation. Testimony is about God, told to the congregation. Since testimony is often a story about God’s faithfulness, this book suggests that it might well be placed in the Praising or Hearing section of our worship or as sermon response. *Preparing Sunday Dinner* speaks of the worship leader as host, inviting people to participate fully and appropriately. The worship leader needs to use very clear invitations for the various elements of the



Preparing Sunday Dinner is a thoughtful and comprehensive discussion of the elements of worship and has very helpful guidance for how to equip ourselves to plan for worship. It is a book that every congregation should own as a reference book for worship commissions. I would suggest that worship commissions set aside part of each of their meetings to discuss parts of this book, working their way through it over the course of a year. It would be a source of growth and knowledge for each member and would certainly spill over into more savory worship in your congregation.

Robin Walton, a chaplain and member of Columbus Mennonite Church, also is a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Walton took part in the “Revitalizing Testimony in Worship” workshop held by Ohio Conference in November 2008. *Preparing Sunday Dinner* is available from the Ohio Conference Resource Library. A listing of items in the Resource Library is located on the Ohio Conference Web site: www.ohio.mennonite.net.

God’s story is the thing that brings us in the door. Testimony is the opportunity for us to tell stories of God’s activity in our lives.

to the Mennonite Church at large in the area of worship. It provides the insight and tools we need to make worship planning a collaborative venture within the congregation and between the worship planners and God’s Spirit.

In fact, the authors believe that God provides the feast, and we can learn to partner with God to prepare and serve it. God invites us to participate and has gifted us with the skills we need. As we plan worship services, *Preparing Sunday Dinner* prompts us to examine each part of the service by asking ourselves key questions such as, “Who is talking

service, including sharing or testimony, to set the boundaries that are appropriate for those elements of the service.

God’s story is the thing that brings us in the door. Testimony is the opportunity for us to tell stories of God’s activity in our lives. *Preparing Sunday Dinner* says that contemporary testimony restores the original power to the Biblical story. Our stories and our concerns told in the community of faith help us understand ourselves in an ever-changing world and understand God’s activity in it.

Crossing barriers

Continued from page 1

church members borrowed a donkey, hooked a cart behind it and put a music player on the cart. Then they walked through the neighborhood singing.

"It was just a way to get someone to open the door and say, 'What is goin' on?'" Crockett said. "Then we could greet people. We could touch them for the Kingdom of God."

Diversity within the congregation is a challenge Nze described. Christ Life Chapel in the Phoenix area is comprised of people from many different countries and cultures in Africa. They have a rule that everyone must speak English, because that is a common language for all. However, they occasionally have a "culture" Sunday when everyone is encouraged to express their culture. "We don't believe culture should die," Nze said.

They recently focused worship services for two months on the Holy Spirit and encouraged members to share what the Spirit of God is saying to them. "The more we see through the eyes of the Spirit, the more our colors disappear." Nze emphasized.

Olarewaju told the group that if you heard the singing from outside his church, you would think it was a white church, when instead it is predominantly African-American. This is because their pianist cannot play other styles of music. But he sees a benefit in this. "We are a local church that learns to appreciate all kinds of music. Here I am from Africa and I love country music!" he said.

Nina Bartelt Lanctot, associate director of Engaging Pastors, invited participants to share what they believed God was saying through the stories. McMillon reflected, "The Mennonite church nearest to Open Door is a 90-minute drive away. So

hearing stories of like-minded people working for the Kingdom of God, we know we are not alone."

Seferina deLeon, a lay leader at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor in Goshen, said she believed God was saying, "Be still and know that I am God." She added, "God knows where He is going to take us, and we need to let Him lead the way."

Crockett noted three things: "It's important to be led by the Holy Spirit; God has no color; and it's time for us to encourage each other."

Reflecting on the evening, Lanctot later said, "I wanted to do more listening and learning about opportunities where divisions are being bridged. Some of these divisions are

race, but others are socio-economic classes, nationality, education and theological differences.

"Making room for 'the other' takes energy; there are hurdles to overcome," Lanctot observed. "But when we cross the hurdles, it's energizing."

AMBS's Engaging Pastors program is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment. The goal of Engaging Pastors is to bring faculty members and pastors together for collaboration and conversation. Through this program the sabbatical guests receive some funding and in exchange they share the projects they are working on with AMBS.

OMW Retreat

Continued from page 1

lished jobs and spending time with family and "down-and-outs."

Marilyn and Hank both experienced a new dependence on God from their Africa experience, and Marilyn now delights in acknowledging the hand of God wherever she sees it, and tries to take life slowly. Her passions are worship and discipleship, and she enjoys playing music from classical organ to hammer dulcimer in a bluegrass band. Her other hobbies include winding up her grandchildren and trying to train her miniature dachs-

hound to not bark. Hank and Marilyn have two married daughters, Rebecca Lachman and Sarah Nussbaum, and two grandchildren, Ava and Carsten.

Saturday workshops will center on the care of body, soul and home. Lois Bontrager of Mennonite Mutual Aid will lead a workshop on personal finances. Ida Mae Weaver will set up comforters to knot which will be given to the homeless.

Retreat brochures will be sent to each Ohio Conference congregation. An abbreviated regis-

OMW Retreat Registration

Camp Luz, Sept. 18-20, 2009

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Church Name _____

Church City _____

Registration Fee

___ \$70 Full registration (Friday-Sunday)

___ \$20 Friday only

___ \$40 Saturday only

Mail registration form and \$25 by Sept. 6 to **Louise Smith, 9505 Mitchell Road, Union City PA 16438.**

About people



Cheryl Vanatsky was installed as pastor of Maple Grove Mennonite Church in New Castle, Pa., on Sunday, May 3. Regional Pastor **Matt Hamsher** led in the installation ceremony.

Pastoral notes

Cheryl Vanatsky was installed as pastor of Maple Grove Mennonite Church near New Castle, Pa., on May 3. Regional Pastor **Matt Hamsher** led the licensing ceremony.

Cheryl grew up in West Virginia and the Youngstown, Ohio, area. She began attending the Midway Mennonite Church congregation near Columbiana as an adult and was baptized there in 1993. With the help of her small group at Midway and the mentorship of Midway's former pastor, **Larry Rohrer**, Cheryl went through a process of discernment that clarified her sense of calling to ministry.

After completing a Master of Divinity degree at Ashland Theological Seminary, she was hired as a local pastor by the United Methodist Church and served a two-point charge at Leetonia and Washingtonville United Methodist churches.

While Cheryl appreciated her time with the United Methodist Church, she is glad to be "back home" in the Mennonite Church and

looking forward to serving the Maple Grove congregation. Cheryl is serving the congregation on a half-time basis.

Cheryl also has degrees in special education, early intervention, and educational administration and teaches a special needs preschool class in the Youngstown school district. "Cheryl is a very compassionate and caring person and this has been evident in her role as a teacher and as a pastor. She is friendly, responsible, and committed to following Jesus," said Regional Pastor Matt Hamsher.

...
Mattie Marie Mast has finished her term of service as associate pastor of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church in Kidron. The congregation honored her at a special farewell service on Sunday morning, April 26.

...
Mike Mast has completed his term of service as interim pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Wooster.

During the months of June and July, **Haroldo Nunes** will serve the

congregation as interim pastor in addition to his duties as pastor to the Hispanic members of the congregation.

Hesston College

Seven students from Ohio Conference congregations earned associate degrees from Hesston College during commencement exercises Sunday, May 3.

Lauren Alyssa Zehr of Wau-seon earned an associate degree of applied arts and sciences in general studies. Her home congregation is North Clinton Mennonite.

Shawn Lamar Nolt of Hesston, Kan., and Dalton, earned an associate of arts and applied sciences in pastoral ministry. His home congregation is Chestnut Ridge Mennonite.

Five Ohio Conference students earned associate of arts degrees: **Alyssa Ann Hostetler** of West Liberty, Oak Grove Mennonite (West Liberty); **Annali Dawn Murray** of Orrville, Martins Mennonite; **Jessica Lynn Neer** of West Liberty, Oak Grove Mennonite (West Liberty); **Andrew Eugene Nussbaum** of Apple Creek, Sonnenberg Mennonite; and **Cassandra Jo Steiner** of Apple Creek, Kidron Mennonite.

Goshen College

Four students from Ohio Conference congregations were among the 236 candidates who received diplomas at Goshen College's 111th Annual Commencement April 26.

Lindsey A. Beck, daughter of **Neal** and **Julia Beck** of Archbold, received a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary with concentrations in sociology, social work and women's studies. She is a 2005 graduate of Archbold High School. Her home congregation is Central Mennonite.

Brooke N. Blough, daughter of **Rhoda Blough of Colorado**, re-

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About people

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ceived a bachelor's degree in Bible and religion. She is a 2004 graduate of Central Christian High School. Her home congregation is Beech Mennonite.

Rachel A. Clasen, daughter of **Tony** and **Mary Clasen** of West Liberty, received a bachelor's degree in nursing. She is a 2005 graduate of West Liberty Salem High School. Her home congregation is Oak Grove Mennonite (West Liberty).

Alexander J. Troyer, son of **Jeffrey** and **Brenda Troyer** of Wooster, received a bachelor's degree in art. He is a 2004 graduate of Central Christian High School. His

home congregation is Wooster Mennonite Church.

Four students from Ohio Conference congregations are participating in the Goshen College Study-Service Term (SST) during this summer.

Junior **Jonathan Stuckey**, son of **Randy** and **Karen Stuckey** of West Unity, is participating in the Study-Service Term in Nicaragua during this summer, along with 22 other students. This is the second group to return to that country after 30 years.

Stuckey's home congregation is Zion Mennonite. He left for Nicara-

gua April 29 and will return to the United States on July 28.

Junior **Rosemary Esch**, daughter of **Arland Esch** of Lebanon and **Carolyn Miller** of Bellefontaine, is participating in the Study-Service Term (SST) in Jena, Germany, with 10 other students during the summer semester. Her home congregation is Jubilee Mennonite.

Goshen students have studied in Germany since 1970, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, though this unit is the last from Goshen College to go to Germany. They left for Germany on April 29 and will return to the United States on July 28.

Students spend the first half of the 13-week term studying the language and the culture of the country in Jena and the second half of the term fulfilling service requirements.

Eric Hochstetler of Orrville and **Lindsey Nofziger** of Toledo are participating in the Goshen College Study-Service Term (SST) in Perú during this summer, along with 19 other students. They left for Perú on April 29 and will return to the United States on July 28.

Hochstetler, a sophomore, is the son of **Harold** and **Lois Hochstetler** of Orrville. His home congregation is Oak Grove Mennonite (Smithville).

Nofziger, a junior, is the daughter of **Joel** and **Carol Nofziger** of Toledo. Her home congregation is Toledo Mennonite.

Students spend the first six weeks studying with private language teachers, as they live with families in Lima. During the second half of their three-month stay, students will spread out across the country to live with families and volunteer at service assignments.

Web updates and photos from all three SST groups are available from Goshen College's SST Web site: www.goshen.edu/sst.

Central students excel in TEAMS



Students from Central Christian High School in Kidron achieved high rankings in the Test of Aptitude and Math and Science (TEAMS) test at the University of Akron this spring. Each year Dave Risser, Central's 11th- and 12th-grade math and science teacher, takes two teams of students to compete with other schools in this engineering test.

The purpose of the test is to challenge students in their math and science reasoning and problem solving. For schools in Central's division (based on size of the senior class), the varsity team ranked fifth in the nation, and the junior varsity team ranked second in the nation.

The varsity team, made up of seniors, is pictured and includes (back row left to right) Coach Dave Risser, Takeyori Hirukawa, Andrew Geiser, Gideon Dunster and Nigel Wright and (front row left to right) Derek Ressler, Alyssa Steiner, Hannah Miller and Michael Hershberger. Junior varsity team members, chosen from the sophomore and junior classes, included Isaac Clay, Melissa Kreis, Jordan King, Jack Lyons, Katrina Schmid, Gregory Seymour, Brennan Ujchich, and Clinton Weaver.

For more Ohio Conference news and information, visit the Ohio Conference Web site: www.ohio.mennonite.net.

Back page briefings...

Ohio Conference is planning a pastor-spouse retreat which will be held Nov. 6-8 at the Mohican State Park Lodge in Loudonville. Donations from Ohio Mennonite Women and an anonymous donor will pay for part of the cost of the retreat, allowing the first 30 couples who register to receive a significant price discount. A brochure with more information is available on the Ohio Conference Web site: www.ohio.mennonite.net. To download the brochure, go to "Publications" and then see "News and Information."

A copy of the new Ohio Conference DVD, "Doing Together What We Cannot Do Apart" is now posted on the Ohio Conference Web site. To see the video, go to www.ohio.mennonite.net. Also available for viewing is a copy of a six-minute video about the 2009 Annual Conference Assembly.

Ohio Conference ended the 2008-09 fiscal year with a surplus, reports Financial Coordinator Stan Helmuth. Total receipts for the year were \$545,219, and expenses were \$459,835, resulting in a surplus of \$85,384 for the fiscal year, which ended March 31. Helmuth noted that congregational giving was \$37,700 above the amount budgeted for 2008-09. In addition, congregational giving was \$29,142 more than in 2007-08.

Norma Duerksen, pastor of Summit Mennonite Church, is the Resource Advocate for Ohio Conference. In this role, she is responsible for making congregations aware of the vast array of resources that Mennonite agencies create. To help people learn more about what resources are available, she has begun a new column called "Resource Corner" which is featured in *Ohio Evangel* and *Perspective*. "Resource Corner" appears on page 2 of this issue.

Girls in grades 3-8 are invited to attend the Girls' Jamboree at Camp Luz on Aug. 7-9. Deb Horst, director of

Camp Luz, will introduce them to four women who followed Jesus obediently. The weekend will include lodging, meals, music, crafts, a service project, games, swimming and boating. The cost is only \$20 per camper. Registration information was mailed to churches in May. Please contact Hannah Gehman at (330) 857-7677 or gehman.1@osu.edu if you need a registration packet or further information. Registration deadline is July 22.

Conference calendar

June

- 16 Ministry Development Team Meeting
- 19-20 Black Swamp Benefit Bazaar, Fulton County Fairgrounds
- 27-28 Centennial Celebration, Orrville Mennonite
- 30-July 5 Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009, Columbus

July

- 14-19 Paraguay 2009, Mennonite World Conference Global Assembly, Asunción, Paraguay

August

- 7-9 Girls' Jamboree, Camp Luz
- 11 Ministry Development Team Meeting

September

- 19 Youth Worker Training Seminar with Walt Mueller, Central Christian School, Kidron
- 18-20 Ohio Mennonite Women's Retreat, Camp Luz

November

- 6-8 Pastor-Spouse Retreat, Mohican State Park Lodge, Loudonville

March 2009

- 12-13 Annual Conference Assembly, Central Mennonite Church, Archbold