

# The Messenger

## August 2019



To the body of Christ our savior at Grace Mennonite Church, greetings in the name of the living God.

On June 20 my family and I embarked on a church business road trip adventure that, over the span of almost three weeks, took us to Milwaukee, WI for the Central District Conference (CDC) annual meeting, Cassopolis, MI to serve as camp pastor for the Pre-Junior camp week, and to Kansas City, MO for the biennial Mennonite Church USA convention (MennoCon19). Everyone traveled well, Lord bless them. Our van held up like a champion, praise God! After 18 days on the road, with hearts full of memories and heads full of experience we headed for home. We arrived in Bluffton late Sunday night, July 7. Here are some highlights of my epic Conference-Camp-Convention ministry road trip of 2019.

### Conference

Our beloved church and world continue to convulse with the birth pangs of the new thing to which the God of our ancestors and father of our Lord Jesus Christ is about to give birth. The theme of this year's Conference annual meeting was "Come walk with us ... to God knows where."

Indeed. This year's meeting was hosted by Milwaukee Mennonite Fellowship in the church building they share with a Lutheran church.

As our denomination continues to live into the dual adoption of the "Forbearance" resolution and the resolution "To uphold MC USA Membership Guidelines" by the delegate assembly at the 2015 convention in Kansas City, individual conferences' and congregations' affiliations with each other and the denomination continue to shift. Congregations that find themselves adrift over the past four years continue to find a welcoming home in CDC. This year the CDC delegate assembly, including me, Jon Hilty, and Sue Habegger, representing Grace Mennonite Church, voted unanimously to accept into CDC membership three new congregations. Those churches are Americus Mennonite Fellowship of Americus, GA, Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Florida, and Jubilee Mennonite Church of Bellefontaine, OH.

The CDC delegate assembly also received an introduction to a conversation between our Conference Minister, Doug Luginbill, and SEMILLA about how our two organizations might partner together in the future. SEMILLA is a Central American education and training program for Anabaptist-Mennonite leaders. SEMILLA is the Spanish word for "seed" and is an acronym for the Spanish name of the organization which translates into English as "Ministerial Seminary for Anabaptist-Mennonite Leaders". SEMILLA trains Anabaptist Mennonite leaders in Central America to do Anabaptist theology and church together in their own various political and social contexts. The organization has gifts to offer members of CDC churches through their learning tours which educate North American visitors about the unique challenges and opportunities of doing Anabaptist Mennonite faith in

(Cont. page 2)

### Vision: Healing & Hope

God calls us to be  
followers of Jesus Christ  
and, by the power of  
the Holy Spirit,  
to grow as communities  
of grace, joy and peace,  
so that God's healing and  
hope flow through us to  
the world.

### Table of Contents:

Reflections	1-3
Worship Calendar	4
Fundraiser Meal	5
News Among Our Members & Friends	6-7
Anniversaries & Birthdays	8

Grace Mennonite Church  
502 East Main  
Pandora, OH 45877  
(419) 384-3038  
gmc@bluffton.edu  
gracepandora.org  
Pastor Matthew Yoder

Central America. SEMILLA is in the process of seeking financing for their programs through cultivating relationships with partner organizations. What would it look like for CDC to become a partner organization with SEMILLA?

As always, the business aspects of the CDC annual meeting were couched in worship. The annual business meeting opened on Thursday night, June 20 with a 7:30 worship service led by hosting church, Milwaukee Mennonite. The theme was "Obstacles," our speaker was Anton Flores-Maisonet and the preaching text was John 4:4-10. Other worship themes throughout the weekend included "Perseverance/Persistence" and "Thriving." The message was clear; as we journey together we will meet many obstacles. By the power of God's Holy Spirit moving among us we will persevere, and God will lead us to a place of thriving. Each business session began with an opening song and included a centering prayer. In addition to receiving new congregations and discussing a future relationship with SEMILLA, the delegate assembly approved the minutes of the 2018 annual meeting and a spending plan for 2019-2020. We also heard committee reports, one of which was from the Missional Church Committee of which I am a member. The Missional Church Committee continues to discern how best to do the work to which we've been called. Two major parts of our work are processing CDC Reign of God grants and sending CDC representatives to the SENT conference. If you have questions about Reign of God grants or the SENT conference, give me a call, text or e-mail.

It's never all business at the CDC annual meeting. In addition to worshipping, singing and praying together, delegates also had multiple learning/enrichment opportunities through various "Storytelling Stations" on Friday afternoon and seminars on Friday evening.

In a time of deep change in culture, faith and politics, God's presence continues to breathe life, hope and joy into the CDC and constituent congregations; thanks be to God! For more information about the CDC annual meeting, visit the CDC website or request a copy of the delegate booklet from the Grace Mennonite Church office.

## Camp

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, June 22-23, my family and I enjoyed a day together touring Chicago and seeing the sights before traveling on to Camp Friedenswald.

This year I served as camp pastor for ages 8-10. Each day we gathered for morning devotions at "Morning Watch," a mid-morning Bible study, and evening worship at the camp fire in Mosquito Hollow. Our morning devotions, Bible study and worship were guided by reflection on a new focus word each day of the week. Each word was from a different language and communicated aspects of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith. Our six focus words for the week were "Aloha," "Ubuntu," "Shalom," "Agape," "Heiwa," and "Si, se puede!"

"Aloha" is a Hawaiian word that communicates aspects of hospitality. "Ubuntu" is a South African concept that encompasses aspects of community. "Shalom" is a Hebrew word for peace and "Agape" is a Greek word for love. "Heiwa" is a Japanese word that communicates the ease and flow of right living, or, "righteousness." "Si, se puede" means "yes, it can be done!" and communicates aspects of Christian discipleship.

As always, being at camp was a tremendous blessing. Connecting with the campers and staff was a true joy. Doing this act of service was all the sweeter for being able to serve in the beautiful context of God's creation. While at Friedenswald, my family and I enjoyed opportunities to swim, fish, paddle and sail as well as connect with our friends on staff at Friedenswald. God is a comforting presence in the "Peaceful Woods" of camp!

## Convention

We wrapped up our time at camp on Sunday afternoon, June 30, and arrived on the outskirts of Kansas City Monday night, July 1. MennoCon19 kicked off with opening worship at 7:00 PM on Tuesday night, July 2, but by that time I had already been busy! I had been nominated by the CDC Missional Church Committee on which I serve to attend a Journey Forward Peacemaking summit from 10:30 AM – 6:00 PM on Tuesday. For more information on "Journey Forward" please see the MC USA website. The purpose of this meeting was, through networking with others doing peace work in the Mennonite Church, to discover what peacemaking means for us in MC USA as Anabaptists following Jesus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to inspire our renewed commitment to God's peace. While Mennonite peacemakers regularly gather at local and conference levels to network with each other and discern how to meet the peacemaking challenges of the day, a denomination-wide gathering has not happened in recent memory. This meeting was intended to fill that void. The meeting was organized by Sue Park Hur of MC USA, Jes Buller of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and Jason Boone of the Peace and Justice Support Network (PJSN).

(cont. page 3)

Our meeting processes were led by the same meeting proctor who facilitated the MC USA delegate assembly Journey Forward meeting process at the 2017 MC USA convention in Orlando, FL.

The MC USA delegate assembly convened on Wednesday morning, July 3 at 8:30 sharp. Each morning was devoted to input by Tom Yoder Neufeld from the book of Ephesians. Tom is professor emeritus of Religious Studies (New Testament) at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo. He is an active member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario, chair of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Faith and Life Commission, and chair of dialogue between MWC and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. One of Tom's best known scholarly works is the Believer's Church Biblical Commentary volume on the book of Ephesians. I deeply appreciated the intention with which the delegate assembly began each business meeting with this biblical input by Tom from the book of Ephesians. Tom's input throughout the week centered around the theme of peace as the act of doing faith together with people with whom we have deep disagreements.

Each afternoon the delegate assembly heard denominational agency reports, Journey Forward stories, stories of faith witness from individual congregations, and received information about the business items on the agenda. We heard Journey Forward stories from Everence, Mennonite Mission Network, and MennoMedia. We heard stories of faith witness from Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, Eden Life Church, and Albany Mennonite Church.

Our main business session was on Friday afternoon. We affirmed unanimously the Leadership Discernment Committee's slate of nominees for denominational leadership positions for the coming biennium. We affirmed a list of changes and updates to the language of the MC USA bylaws, most of which were insignificant grammar and consistency revisions. One major revision voted on was the affirmation to include youth as full delegates to the MC USA delegate assembly. This means that churches may send youth as fully participating delegates with voting privileges to MC USA conventions. This change was met with great rejoicing and celebration by all!

The delegate assembly was also informed of an ongoing Membership Guidelines process and asked to respond, via written survey, to the question of whether a Membership Guidelines revision would be important to our congregations and how much energy our congregations would be willing to devote to a Membership Guidelines revision process.

The delegate assembly is always arranged in table groups of 6-8 persons. Our table group discussion time this year was guided by several reflection questions. The questions were:

Based on how you read scripture, if Jesus were to walk into your town today, where would he go, what would he say, what would he do?

Identify one part of our shared peace witness we should work on together for the next biennium.

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit during this week of the convention?

What do you sense God's spirit calling us to be as the body of Christ?

For more information about the MC USA convention, see the MennoCon19 webpage or contact the Grace Mennonite Church office for a copy of the delegate booklet.

In conclusion, this year's MC USA convention remains an exhilarating, demanding, and exhausting experience. The convention is always a good place to make and renew connections with other ministers and leaders from across the denomination. There has certainly been a great winnowing over the past four years since the delegate assembly affirmed both the Forbearance and Membership Guidelines resolutions. Conference attendance and delegate presence were a fraction of what they have been over the years. Our Church has reached a unique moment where the people who cared most about the most pressing question – how MC USA will handle LGBTQ issues – have left the church. Those of us remaining find ourselves in completely uncharted territory. Nevertheless, strong leadership is at the helm and God's Holy Spirit continues to breathe in our midst for just such a time as this. What is next for Mennonite Church USA, its constituent agencies, conferences, and congregations?

## Conclusion

After two and a half weeks of adventuresome travel and fulfilling albeit intense church work, my family and I were overjoyed to return home. Three Sundays was a long time to be away from all of our beloved friends here at Grace. We continue to rest and recover our energy as we get back into our daily routines.

My deepest thanks to you, my congregation, for facilitating this important work and for supporting me and my family in it. And thanks be to our God for all of God's mercy, grace, love and provision for our church, our conference, and our denomination. ~ *Pastor Matthew*

# August 2019

## **Sunday, August 4, 2019**

The Mighty Acts of God

“The Faith of a Gentile”

Pastor Matthew Yoder

*Scripture: Luke 7:1-10*

## **Sunday, August 11, 2019**

The Mighty Acts of God

“Of Demons & Such”

Pastor Matthew Yoder

*Scripture: Luke 8:26-39*

## **Sunday, August 18, 2019**

All-Church Retreat

Worship at Frank’s Farm

Receiving new members through Baptism

Pastor Matthew Yoder

*Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17*

## **Sunday, August 25, 2019**

Education Sunday

Pastor Matthew Yoder

*Scripture: Proverbs 9:10*



## **GRACE MENNONITE MEXICAN FUNDRAISER MEAL** **SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019 - after worship**

Donations will go to MCC to purchase items for  
 IMMIGRATION DETAINEE CARE KITS (IDC)

**After the meal, Elizabeth Nisly will share** about her summer living in Agua Prieta, in the Mexican state of Sonora. As part of an internship with Frontera de Cristo, a border ministry of the Presbyterian church working to assist migrants at the U.S. border between Agua Prieta and its sister city, Douglas, Arizona, Elizabeth is planning and leading ESL (English as a Second Language) programming for children of asylum seekers waiting at the U.S. border.

*In Matthew 25:31-45, Jesus commands that we care for the hungry, thirsty, strangers, those without clothes or in prison. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is following that command by collecting and distributing immigration detainee care kits and partnering with organizations like the South Texas Human Rights Center in Falfurrias, Texas. "We live in a world where the most vulnerable are fleeing from danger and violence. What is most disturbing is that some followers of Jesus, in the U.S., seem to not be troubled. However, Jesus made it clear that we will be judged by how we treat widows, orphans and immigrants. This is a way, a small way, that we feel compelled to affirm the call of Jesus," explains Michelle Armster, Executive Director for MCC Central States.*

*Ana Alicia Hinojosa, MCC Central States Immigration Education Coordinator explains, "The immigration detainee care kits provide clothes and basic human needs to men, women and children seeking refuge who have been detained by U.S. Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and are seeking asylum in the U.S. When they are released after days, weeks, or months of detention they get out with nothing but the clothes they traveled with, shoes without shoelaces, and the hope of being reunited with family at their destination. Our immigration detainee care kits provide individuals with a glimmer of hope that the journey they have endured is worth it and gives them back dignity that they have lost in the process of being in the hands of our government detention system."*

*Tina Schrag, June 24, 2019*

MCC is partnering with the South Texas Response Team, a group of local pastors working with Catholic Charities Respite Center in McAllen, Good Neighbor Settlement House in Brownsville, Loaves and Fishes in Harlingen, Angry Tias & Abuelas in the Rio Grande Valley and other partners to distribute kits to people as they leave detention and are taken to bus stations or airports to reconnect with their families. MCC Material Recourses Center in Newton, KS is now collecting the IDC kits, to be distributed through their partnership with the South Texas Human Rights Center in Falfurrias, Texas. (MCC is not currently collecting kit items in the Great Lakes region, due to us not having any local MCC partner that could distribute them within our region.)

**If you are unable to attend the meal, but want to donate financially, you may make out a check to Grace Mennonite Church, with "MCC:CS Kits" in the memo line, and place it in the offering within the next couple weeks.**

*Thank you!! Judy Smucker & Cindy Luginbill*

## “News Among Our Members & Friends”

### HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND GRACE.....By Shirley Sommer

**Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup>** – Guest speaker for the day was **Ivan Friesen**. His sermon topic was “Life is the Midst of Death.” Scripture reading was I Kings 17:17-24. Reading the scripture it stated **Elijah** fled from **King Ahab** and hid in a widow’s home. He stayed quite a while and then her son died and she felt she was punished but **Elijah** restored the boy’s life. The widower then knew that **Elijah** was a man of **God**. **Ivan** stated that **God** doesn’t always heal us from many illnesses but gives us wise choices when necessary. Faith & Hope has power to heal.

A hymn we sang was so appropriated for this sermon titled, “We walk by Faith.”

**Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>** – Another guest speaker, **Phil Birkey** spoke about “Come Closer.” Scripture was I Kings 18: 20-39. **Phil** mentioned that two ideas come from the Bible reading: faithfulness is required from all of us and don’t do things on your own. Ask for **God’s** help and believe in him. He stated that signs of **God’s Spirit** is at work all around us. Some of the **Spirit’s** are faithfulness, self-control, peace, patience, kindness, know your neighbors, thankfulness, goodness, self-control, love, joy, and peace. **Esther**, his wife, shared a story about when she was 18 years of age volunteered to help other people in another country, leaving her family and mother behind. **Esther** got very sick and people around her couldn’t speak English and things got worst and finally had surgery. The whole time, her mother would tell her to have faith and trust in **God** who would help her through the situation and he did. Everything turned out o.k. Was a great story and message about having TOTAL faithfulness and trust from both **Esther** and **Phil**.

Again, the song “Rain Down” with it’s words just completed their message they shared.

**Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup>** – **Pastor Matthew** and family returned home from being gone three weeks: Central District Conference in Wisconsin; USA Convention in Kansas City, MO.; and then camp pastor for Pre-Jrs. at Camp Friedenswald. His sermon title was “Wind, Earth, Fire, Silence,” the mighty acts of **God**. Scripture was I Kings 19:1-15. The sub-titles were “**Elijah** flees to Horeb” and “The **Lord** appears to **Elijah**.” You’ll have to read the scriptures to see what **Pastor** spoke about since I wasn’t there. (**Keith** and **I** were at Friedenswald for BUILDERS this weekend.)

**Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup>** - was a Sunday of reports from delegates attending the conference and convention and camp. **Pastor Matthew** shared first about being at Central District Conf. in Wisconsin. He mentioned the conference welcomed three new churches. **Doug Luginbill**, was re-elected for another 3 years as conference pastor. Continued to say that the New Hymnal will be coming out and Grace Church contributed quite a few of the songs that were included in it. **Jon Hilty** was a representative and the new music introduced and sung truly reflected on him during now with his journey he is dealing with. Did mention it was good to see old friends and met some new friends. He closed by giving us a title of one of the new hymns, “What is **God’s** dream for me?” **Arman** and **Sue Habegger** were gone but sent messages for the **Pastor** to share. **Arman** was the mediator of Central District and **Sue** enjoyed the music, especially the four-part harmony that the people sang. Ending her sharing, she stated a quote from Conference, “What can I do each day to live the life I was meant for?”

The USA Convention at Kansas City we heard from **Nick Peckinpugh**, one of our church representatives. He said it was a first for him and enjoyed it a lot. Especially liked to hear **Tom Neufeld** who spoke about the **Holy Spirit** and how it works for each of us.

**Karen Byers**, High School youth advisor, flew out to Kansas City with the five youth from church. They were **Annalise Nisly**, **Sophia Smucker**, **Jackson Steinmetz**, **Seth Andress**, and **Tanner Pink**. Each youth spoke about something they experienced: meeting old and new friends, enjoyed the singing and worship services (usually sat in the front row, if possible), learned more about the Mennonites and their faith, and enjoyed the Hesston College basketball coach speaking and last did a “work project” picking up trash at a large park in Kansas City. They also thanked the congregation for supporting them earning the money to go and attend the convention.

**Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>** – Our morning started out with a Brunch in the Fellowship Hall for everyone. Again a nice variety of fresh fruit, cereals, rolls and doughnuts, waffles with different toppings along with orange juice, apple juice and coffee. Thanks to **Joyce & Tom Schumacher, Keith & Jenny Baumgartner, Carolyn & Rod McDaniel** for their help in the kitchen and keeping the counters full of food, especially the coffee, **Rod!**

**Gerald Mast**, our guest speaker from Bluffton University, spoke of “Naboth’s Vineyard” to continue the month’s topic, The Mighty Acts of **God**. Scripture was I Kings 21: 1-10, 15-21a. **Gerald** also included verses through 27 where **Ahab** said he was sorry. He presented the message different than the usual way by becoming each person mentioned in the verses and speaking like they might have felt at that time. It was very, very interesting and so understandable. (He attended a session at the Kansas City convention that they taught the people had to do this. I believe even a young child could understand “the store telling” message like! Thanks so much, **Gerald!**

#### **Other News Items Involving our Church Families----**

**Esther Nafziger & Wendell Badertscher** spent two weeks cruising down the Rhine River and then touring parts of Germany and France looking up the area of Badertscher’s homestead. Had a nice time and still sounded excited about it all when speaking to them.

**Arman & Sue Habegger** are spending four weeks cruising around on the **Mediterranean** Sea area and visiting countries close by. Glad for the ones that are back and wishing **Arman and Sue** safe traveling.

**Jill Steinmetz** returned to the United States on Friday evening, July 12<sup>th</sup> from Hondrous. She looked good and seemed to be very happy to be with her family and friends. Her next adventure is to go to Austin, Texas and look for a job helping with doing what she can with the immigration there and doing free lance graphic design until then. You can tell her brothers seemed to have really missed her.

**Ted Cunningham** has a new email address: [baumgartner.the@bluemail.ch](mailto:baumgartner.the@bluemail.ch). Please change the email in the church directory.

**Joel Steinmetz family, Tim & Cindy Luginbill, Keith and I** attended Friedenswald Builder’s weekend, July 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>. A “warm time” we had with nice clear weather and enjoyed visiting with old friends and met a few new ones. The boats were sure busy on the lake giving people rides and doing different water rides.

**Terry & Beth Schey** plus **Lane & Teresa & Elizabeth Suter, Kim & Rachel and Aden** spent a week in Moundridge, Kansas visiting **Beth’s mother, Rachel**. In between visiting with **Rachel**, they spent time with **Beth’s** sister and husband and even sightseeing around the area. Everyone arrived there and back home safe and sound and all glad to be back. Thanks for safe traveling for these folks.

A group of ladies from church along with some friends went for the day to tour a quilt exhibit, “A Century of Quilting” at the Allen Co. Museum on Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. They stopped at Heavenly Stitches (a quilt shop), Lima, and then ate lunch at Cracker Barrel before going to the museum. I’m very sure they all had a good time especially eating and visiting together.

At the end of July, we have had a few more **Prayer Concerns** from our church family. Remembering the family of **Dale Warnecke**, brother & bro-in-law of **Kevin & Lisa Schey (Terry’s son & family)**, **Laurie**, friend of **Frank Gibbs** is struggling with the chemotherapy she is having; and for the improving strength of **Dylan Sommer’s** lungs and his struggle now trying to eat solid foods (son of **Christian & Melissa Sommer**). May each of these families feel the presence of **God’s** healing hands and our prayers.



## on the calendar....

**Sunday, August 4**-Grace Mennonite Mexican Fundraiser Meal after worship

**Tuesday, August 6**-Council meeting 7:00 pm

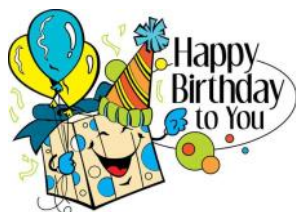
**Sunday, August 11**-Mudhens Outing!

**Wednesday, August 14**-Shepherding Team meeting 7:00 pm

**Sunday, August 18**-Church retreat at Frank's Pond



Josh & Jackie Schumacher	August 1, 1998	Ken & Marcia Lugibihl	August 17, 1968
Brad & Allison Spangler	August 2, 2008	Ivan & Rachel Friesen	August 21, 1967
Paul & Jeanette Weaver	August 7, 1993	Jeff & Jenny Fish	August 22, 1992
Tim & Brenda Byers	August 9, 1975	Wendell Badertscher & Esther Nafziger	August 25, 1979
Brian & Robin Timpe	August 13, 2011	Oliver & Pat Lugibihl	August 27, 1977
Bill & Donna Suter	August 15, 1987		



## August Birthdays

Ravonn Kauffman	August 2	Oliver Lugibihl	August 21, 1932
Madelyn Renner	August 2, 2002	Keith Sommer	August 23, 1942
Elizabeth Nisly	August 3, 1998	Ramsey Schroeder	August 26, 2016
Cindy Luginbill	August 5, 1954	Josh Schumacher	August 27, 1976
Tim McCarthy	August 8, 1957	Guy Verhoff	August 27, 1959
Olivia Verhoff	August 13, 1988	Sue Habegger	August 29, 1954
Bill Hanefeld	August 17	Caitlyn Renner	August 30, 2000
Christie Suter	August 19, 1976	Grant Lugibihl	August 31, 1996
Irene Baumgartner	August 20, 1927		

**Deadline for the next Messenger is August 27, 2019**