



New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Celebration '09: Register Now



Photo by Becky Hollenberg

Mist rising off Beaver Lake

Relax, learn and grow at Celebration '09!

September 18th -20th at Beaver Camp

Register by September 9 for this enlightening, uplifting, fun weekend.

Keynote speaker: Alan Kreider

Tongue Screws and Testimony: Living and Sharing our Faith as a Missional People

Be energized by Steve Shank's workshop on a vision and rationale for church planting—here in NYMC.

Worship, workshops, children's activities, Beaver Camp Challenge Course, Delegate Assembly, prayer, celebration, and sharing. Come enjoy!

Plan for Pittsburg, 2011—It's Worth It

Terry Zehr

It was a struggle for us to decide to go to Convention this year. Lisa and I are busy with work and raising boys, and I'm not currently pastoring a church. Besides, Convention is kind of expensive. We weren't sure about spending the money. So we waffled before deciding that, in fact, affordability wasn't really the issue. It was more about our desire to use vacation time and money to attend Columbus 2009. As a result, we're already making plans for Pittsburg '11. Convention is simply worth attending. For everyone. We made the right choice.

Collin (age 9) was part of the Children's Convention, and Jordan (age 14) was part of the Jr. High Convention. Their experiences were 'sweet' and 'sick' (the Kutless concert... a good thing, I'm told), and fun. Both wondered why it couldn't last longer. Lisa was a 'free agent' conventioneer. She went to various seminars, worship services, drama performances, the zoo and music concerts, while connecting with familiar faces for good fellowship. I... well, I worked.

I was a Delegate from New York Mennonite Conference along with Sue Klassen. Each day we gathered as a Delegate body for morning and afternoon sessions. Sue and I were Table Group leaders which meant that we were each responsible to make sure our table of eight Delegates were functioning well and on task, and making sure everyone was involved in the dialogue. The work was great. Even when it was difficult.

The speakers were excellent. And they seemed to have a theme that was consistent. Jim Wallis, Shane Claiborne, Greg Boyd, Jim Schrag, and others gave messages of hope while also cajoling us to live into who God calls us to be in our world. They believe we have 'good stuff' (Jim Wallis). Shane laughed a bit ruefully when he was asked to talk about Jesus' politics to Mennonites. Jim Schrag said that if we are catch the wind of the Spirit, we need to 'raise our sails' (make ourselves ready and available). And Greg Boyd

believes we have a story that others will want to be part of if we can 'stop majoring in the minors' and unapologetically hold to our central convictions of what it means to follow Jesus.

You can find information about Columbus 2009 on the MC USA website (mennoniteusa.org) with information and resolutions that we passed. You can also order DVD's of the speakers. I believe that God was with us in Columbus and that we have the promise of the Spirit's presence as we move into our future as we tackle interesting, thorny, difficult issues of the Kingdom.

Convention is for everyone, regardless of age. In 2011, Convention will be in Pittsburg, PA. Please... join us. It's just worth it.

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Editor: Sue Klassen <sueklassen@gmail.com>

Congregational News Editor: Kirk House <nymclife@yahoo.com>

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Betsegaw Joins Ephraim and Tadelech

Ephraim Lemma and Tadelech Matewos welcomed their son, Betsegaw to United States on July 6, 2009. Betsegaw was one of the limited number of immigrants granted a Green Card each year in a process akin to a lottery.

Tadelech had not seen her son since she moved here nine years ago, and Ephraim had not seen him in the five years he has been here.

Ephraim said, "We are very happy. God answers prayer on his time."



Photo contributed by Ephraim Lemma

Betsegaw

Grandparent/Grandchild Week at Beaver Camp

Terry Zebr Moderator, NYMC

This year, I joined a unique camping experience up at Beaver Camp. All other years, I participated in the children's camp, but this year I didn't really have the time available for a whole week. So I signed up for Grandparent/Grandchild camp which is only 2 1/2 days long. What I found was something precious and unique.

In 2 Timothy, Paul speaks of Timothy's faith that lived first in his Grandmother, was handed down to his mother and then him. I was impressed with the grandparents who took the time to be with their grandchildren in the beautiful setting of Beaver Camp. The overwhelming majority were repeat campers. It seems that when you do this camp once, it becomes something of a tradition.

Some Grandparents have attended over 10 straight years. Their grandchildren look forward to it each year. It is a time of 'handing down' the faith by spending deliberate time playing, eating, doing crafts, praying, talking, telling stories and hanging out with each other.

Perhaps you haven't considered participation in the past, but I'd like to ask Grandparents to think about your love for your grandchildren, and your desire for them to find a living faith. Beaver Camp offers this wonderful space to spend time without cooking or cleaning or even entertaining them. It is an uncluttered time that offers blessings that can last for all eternity. Come join us next summer.

Conference Minister Search Update

Following a broad search, the Search Committee—appointed by Coordinating Council—has recommended **Gene Miller** as Conference Minister.

Coordinating Council interviewed Gene on July 23, and has offered him the position. Final details—including the affect on Overseer positions—are being negotiated, and Gene has conditionally accepted the offer. Once a conference minister has accepted an offer, the Delegates will have the opportunity to affirm the candidate. Please continue to hold this process in prayer.

Prayers for Church Planting

Gene Miller, Interim Conference Minister and Interim Overseer (Excerpts from longer report)

On Saturday, July 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., seven pastors and conference leaders met at the Harris Hill building to pray and to discern direction for a church plant in the Buffalo area. It was an excellent day as we spent time dwelling in the word, praying alone, praying in one group, sharing and discerning together, and driving throughout the greater Buffalo area.

Some of the people groups we've identified in the greater Buffalo area are the white upper middle class in the area around the Harris Hill building; Hispanic and immigrants (west side of Buffalo); SUNY and other college students with thousands of international students; African Americans throughout Buffalo and on the east side; Asian (Indian, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese); American Indians north of Buffalo; and Muslims south of Buffalo in Lackawanna.

We shared a desire for this new work to include the poor, urban outreach and other races.

Is our box too small? What if God wants to do more than establish one church? Could this become a center, an incubator, a greenhouse where God raises up new works? Could we have various models of the church with creative, new expressions of the body (e.g. house church, emergent church, home Bible study, immigrant outreach)?

Evangelism will be a focus. Our desire is to promote Jesus. Peace in personal relationships.

The closing of the Harris Hill church gives an opportunity to do something new—things that one typically couldn't do in an established church. New life arising from the old.

We felt we should find the church planter and have them help discern if the new work will be located primarily in the Harris Hill building. This person will help determine the direction and core values of the new work. We agreed to be in prayer for the right person(s) for this new work.

In summary, we sensed God's presence and shared a belief that we are to move forward in this exciting journey. We don't yet know the destination but believe God has something good ahead.

Congregational News

Edited by Kirk House

Lowville youth climb mountain

Lowville junior youth climbed to 4000 feet of altitude on May 31, scaling Cascade Mountain outside Lake Placid. After an upward journey of two and a-half hours, the group encountered winds of 40 mph on the treeless top, then returned to their vans just as a hailstorm started.

Lowville Sewing Circle Active

On June 2 Lowville Faithful Workers Sewing Circle completed four 60 x 80 quilts for MCC. They also tied one queen quilt and finished three newborn kits... besides collecting 20 health kits, eight bath towels, ten pounds of used clothing, and \$350.

Save the Dates:

Delegate Assembly ☞ September 19, Beaver Camp
Celebration 2009 ☞ September 18-20, Beaver Camp