



**New York
Mennonite
Conference**

An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Delegate Assembly: Dreams and Visions

Sue Klassen

Delegates met on March 27 to worship and fellowship together and to enact the business of the conference. “It was a very productive meeting. The delegates were engaged, they approved all initiatives, and we finished ahead of schedule—a first,” Moderator Sonya Stauffer told me.

Conference Minister Gene Miller presented the draft “Dreams and Visions: A Seven Year Strategic Plan.” Table groups focused on two priorities—renewed churches and new churches—as they responded to the plan. Coordinating Committee (CC) will be compiling input from the table groups, and will send it to NYMC congregations for feedback.

Bethel Church in Amsterdam, NY, formally requested to join NYMC. “It is not good for a pastor or a church to stand alone,” Pastor Julio Rodriguez said. Delegates gave a standing ovation to affirm their acceptance. The Bethel congregation had the largest contingent in attendance at Delegate Assembly.

A Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit will begin this fall in Rochester. MVS recommends that each individual unit have

some start-up funds. The delegates approved a gift of \$10,000 as seed money to the unit, to be taken from the MMA Reserve Fund. The unit should be self-sufficient within three years.

Dale Beebe reviewed the NYMC agreement to help fund the work of Ephraim Lemma and Tadelech Matewos in Bethsaida Ministries. As of December 2009, NYMC has fulfilled its commitment of financial support for them. The delegates approved CC’s proposal to phase out financial support by the end of 2010. Sonya Stauffer read a letter from Tadelech and Ephraim expressing their gratitude to NYMC; they feel blessed to be serving God and desire to continue their relationship with NYMC.

Other reports and proposals were accepted by the delegates as well. Treasurer Dan Gallagher presented a five-month financial report showing a drop in our balance from \$28,892 to \$22,588—largely due to funds paid out for continued Bethsaida support. The delegates accepted a Ministerial Misconduct Policy and Proposal, which can be found on the NYMC website. Following

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Prayer, Discernment Surround Church Plant

Sue Klassen

Following an evening of prayer at the Harris Hill church building on Friday evening, April 9, eleven people met on Saturday, April 10 in Buffalo for a day of discernment regarding one or more church plants. The day included a walking tour of part of the middle west side of Buffalo, and a driving tour of Allentown, two areas of interest for possible church plants. Planning, prayer and a discussion of core values helped in discernment. While the group looked at possible buildings, Steve Shenk, a consultant from Eastern Mennonite Missions, counseled that a building is less important than people in planting a church. Moderator Sonya Stauffer described serendipitous moments arising out of wrinkles in plans. Please pray for this process as we continue to watch what God is doing and join in.

Stutzman, Youth Convention at Celebration



Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director
Mennonite Church USA

Sue Klassen

Plan now to attend NYMC’s annual gathering September 17-19. Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA’s new Executive Director, will be the speaker. A youth convention is being planned. Youth leaders, please send Dan Gallagher your contact information at dgallagher@stny.rr.com. Watch for posters in your congregation brought back by your delegates.

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Congregational News

Edited by Kirk House

Lowville, Croghan: Quilt Tying Blitz

Lowville and Croghan Mennonite joined forces with other community folks for a Quilt Tying Blitz on behalf of MCC's Haiti relief. Their goal was a hundred comforters toward MCC's call for ten thousand. Ninety were tied on the spot and ten others brought in finished, meeting the goal exactly. The group also put together 94 relief kits.

Lowville congregation itself did an additional 71 kits... besides accounting for 56 of the ninety quilts sent in for tying. Lowville's Faithful Workers Sewing Circle also completed 19 baby layettes and six quilts at their February meeting, besides taking in 53 towels and \$345 for relief kits.

Pleasant Valley supports MCC Canner

The MCC canner will be in the Penn Yan-Dundee area April 12 through 15, with plans to process 36,000 pounds of turkey. Pleasant Valley congregation is donating a thousand dollars for support of the week's work.

Discernment for Buffalo Area

NYMC members and leadership met on April 9 at the former Harris Hill Church building to pray for God's discernment concerning one or more church plants in the Buffalo area..

Alden hosts EMHS Choir

Alden: Eastern Mennonite High School Choir presented a concert on April 13, following a joint meal with choir members and Alden's youth.

Alden Women's Prayer Breakfast

The 23rd Alden Women's Prayer Breakfast will be held on Sat., April 24, 9:00-11:30am, at the Millgrove Bible Church .



Delegate Assembly

Photo by Dale Rebers

From Drizzles to Torrents: Chenunda Creek Responds

Sherry Volk

When the earthquake struck Haiti, we at Chenunda Creek Fellowship were stricken. The images, the woe, the pain, were almost too much. Very soon, MCC sent a request to the churches for TWENTY THOUSAND Relief Kits. It seemed overwhelming, but we've seen before how, when run together, many little drips can make a very big stream.

Chenunda Creek responded by gathering enough supplies (at about \$40/kit) for more than forty kits. Included in this huge gift were supplies brought by members of other churches in the Andover area -- plus West Union, Corning, and Birch Grove churches, Franklin Community Church, students at Alfred State College, my sister, and Ithaca Home Church.

It was quite the party scene at Chenunda Creek as members gathered midweek to assemble the kits and load them up. The people at MCC in Ephrata did a little happy dance and helped us unload. They couldn't believe how much we'd been able to load into our minivan. Neither could we. We traveled with it level full to the tops of the drivers' and passengers' seats, carrying as much as it was safe to travel with.

What a blessing the whole experience was! I'm thinking that more than 200 people responded in some way to Chenunda Creek's determination to do something, and I was particularly blessed by my students' willingness to share. We put some "drips" together and made a "drizzle," but I love to imagine the torrent that is being produced by people of good will, motivated by the love of Christ.

Dreams and Visions, continued from on p. 1

Gene Miller's report on the Church Planting Initiative rising out of the closing of Harris Hill Mennonite, the delegates approved that \$5000 from the MMA Reserve Fund be set aside for foundational/preparatory use to start one or more congregations in the Buffalo area. Congregations had time to report on their joys and challenges near the end of the meeting.

Delegates had the opportunity to browse and buy at a book table set up by Resource Advocate, Kathy Shelly. Kathy reported that she is willing to help set up similar book tables for individual congregations. Contact her if interested: Kathy.shelly@gmail.com

Gene Miller ended with a reprise of the proposed Dreams and Vision, and a benediction, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen!"

Based on minutes from NYMC secretary Joyce Combs



Photo courtesy: Beulah Church

Gene Miller with Pastor Julio, Yareli, Mildred, and Julio E. Rodriguez

Save the Dates:

Women's Gathering with Linda Wright, May 1, RAMF
Minister's Retreat with Marcus Smucker, August 9-11, Beaver Camp
Celebration 2010 with Ervin Stutzman, September 17-19, Penn-York Camp