



## New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

# LIFE

## In New York Mennonite Conference

### Andrew Langbehn Installed at Corning

*Sarah Blaisdell*

How joyful we were at Community Mennonite Fellowship on June 8th, as we welcomed our new pastor and his wife, Andrew and Kristen Langbehn. All morning and all afternoon our congregation, as well as Don and Anne Siegrist and Terry and Lisa Zehr, celebrated and thanked God for this gift of a new leader for CMF.

During the worship service, Andrew and Kristen came forward and Don led them through the installation process, noting that God has called many pastors over many years to serve His Church, and Andrew is the next in that long line. Kristen's presence up front signified her willingness to support Andrew's work. The congregation received Andrew as our minister and co-worker. The transition team, the elders, and Terry Zehr then came to the front to lay hands on Andrew and pray for him.

Andrew preached his first "official" sermon in which he told about his journey of faith and talked about his views on leadership. Andrew sees himself as a leader who points us toward Christ, and he expects the church to support him and hold him accountable.

After a splendid fellowship meal, brothers and sisters from other NYMC congregations—Stephen and Dawn Richards from Chenunda Creek, Tim and Linda Wright from The Jesus Church, Gene and Sharon Miller and Ted Smoker from Yorks Corners—joined the CMF congregation for a licensing service for Andrew.

The licensing service began with songs of praise, followed by several Scripture readings and a sermon from Terry Zehr. Gene Miller then reminded us that God is moving in our church; it's a *Installed, continued on p.2*

### Morning Installation Service



Photo courtesy Gene Kraybill

### An Oxford Spy-er (sic)

*Diane Stitt Melchert, Oxford, England*

A nickname for Oxford (England) is *The City of Dreaming Spires*. Many of the 40 or so colleges that make up the University of Oxford have their own chapel complete with spire. In addition, there are many churches in this small city, most of which also have spires. A landscape view from a nearby park up the hill from us reveals the multitude of these projections piercing the sky. In keeping with the theme, when Said Business School was built, they

*Spy-er, continued on p.2*

### Celebration Plans Underway

Celebration will be a one day event again this year - Saturday, October 18 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. at the Auburn Methodist Church. Enjoy a festive atmosphere as we celebrate good news from across our conference. Plans include youth and children's activities, mission festival, worship, delegate assembly, and workshops.

Keynote speaker is Lois Barrett, Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies, at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The nature of the church has been a long-standing interest for Lois Barrett in her research and writing about house churches, missional ecclesiology, and early Anabaptist religious and cultural history. The church is the people of God, an alternative community with another set of allegiances and another set of practices from the dominant culture. As such, the church is to be light to the world, a city on a hill, a sign of the future God intends for the whole world."

**Lois Barrett**



Photo courtesy AMBS

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## Congregational News

### News from Yorks Corners

A new outreach at Yorks Corners Mennonite Church, a Christian Twelve Step program called Celebrate Recovery, is ministering to those with hurts, habits or hang-ups.

*Spy-er, continued from p.1*

added this interestingly shaped projection that is reminiscent of a ziggurat. It might also suggest a minaret since the school was funded by someone from Saudi Arabia, an Islamic country. Minarets, of course, would be a near equivalent feature of a mosque. Oxford is a multi-ethnic city, so the addition of a ziggurat or minaret-type feature is appropriate.

Since my husband's research field is Islamic history, the Islamic world is familiar to me. We actually lived in several Islamic countries while he was doing research. There are several Muslim families in our neighbourhood. One family a few houses down the street from us is a young couple with four very young children. I sometimes stop in for a chat and we exchange some food items. We talk about food, gardening, health issues, the children and our respective faiths. We compare our prayer routines and how we pray for others. We pray for each other.

Another Muslim acquaintance stops at the Baptist church when they have sales and also attended the church one Sunday. After church, he talked at length with Christoph, then talked to me as I left the church. I asked how his family was and he said he had no children, would I pray for his wife that she would get pregnant. He then asked if I had children and offered to pray for me in like vein. I thanked him (but certainly hoped his prayers for me on that issue bore no fruit—shall we say—I'm beyond the age that I would welcome such an event).

I have often described my ministry as one in which my 'congregation' walks the streets around me, or *'Ministry-on-the-Hoof'*. This is true though I do other things as well, many of which don't fit the traditional mould of a minister with a defined congregation and related responsibilities. More on this in a later issue.

*Installed, continued from p.1*

new day and we are not living in the past. He reaffirmed God's calling on Andrew, and confirmed that both our congregation and the conference are in agreement with this sense of calling. Gene led Andrew through the vows for service in our church; he affirmed the vows and was declared licensed.

Fellowship over desserts followed the licensing service.

Andrew and Kristen come to us from Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, MN, where Andrew served as Care and Communications Coordinator.

Kristen is working as an X-ray technologist at Arnot-Ogden Hospitals and Clinics in Elmira.

CMF looks forward to an exciting future with Andrew and Kristen guiding us to seek God's will for ministry in Corning together.

### Afternoon Licensing Service



### Minister's Retreat

Minister's Retreat at Beaver Camp July 28-30 is an important annual resource event for conference pastors. It begins Monday at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and ends Wednesday after breakfast. The theme is "Our Life Together: Re-Tooling for a New Day". It's an opportunity for pastors to build relationships, encourage one another, discover resources, and enjoy time with God. Please make arrangements directly with Beaver Camp by calling (315) 376-2640.

### Beaver Camp Lodge



Dreams and Visions...

## The Spirit and the Word

*Gene Miller, Conf. Minister*

The conference document "Dreams and Visions" that is guiding our priorities during these years says that we are "sent out in the power of the Spirit living and proclaiming the Kingdom." We are a community of the Spirit that listens to what the Spirit is saying in our discernment processes.

As Mennonites we are also a people of the book—scripture has been central in our nearly 500 year history as Anabaptists. The Anabaptist family of Christians weights a plain reading of scripture as the primary source of authority above all others. Our Confession of Faith says we "accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. We seek to understand and interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ as we are led by the Holy Spirit in the church."

So how do we hold both the Spirit and the word in creative partnership? How does the faithful church discern the way of Jesus as we engage the culture in which we live? We have a tendency to prioritize one or the other, a potentially dangerous path. Let's elevate both the Spirit and the word in this delicate balancing act so that both are central in our church life.

## Save the Dates:

Minister's Retreat, July 28-30, Beaver Camp  
Celebration 2014, October 18, Auburn