

New York Mennonite Conference
Delegate Assembly Agenda
September 15, 2012

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Gathering Worship
Moderator's Report

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Conference Minister Report
Stories celebrating use of Leadership Education funds

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Annual Budget: Stories and Spreadsheets

WHO WILL WORK WITH US?

Renew Conference Minister for another 5 years
Leadership Commission Report
Leadership Commission Lay Representative – Leadership Commission recommends
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Introducing new MCC East Coast Representative – Diane Doebler
Mennonite Women Report
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Sharing from congregations

Investing in God's Kingdom



Moderator's Report

For Delegate Assembly September 15, 2012

Fall is here and time to think about our annual budget. I encourage you to consider your work as delegates and the work of NYMC as investing in God's Kingdom. As single congregations we make one kind of impact in our communities. Together, as a regional body we can make an even greater impact for God's Kingdom.

At our spring Delegate Assembly we created an Outreach and Church Planting Fund that will allow us to work in new ways in our conference. Funds from the former Harris Hill congregation will begin our outreach. We rejoice in the faithful giving of that congregation that helped make the creation of this fund possible. Check out the application form on nymennonite.org and think about outreach possibilities in YOUR area.

We continue to support leadership development through our Leadership Education fund. I encourage you to invite people to apply to use this scholarship fund. We want to be in the business of preparing new people to join in God's Kingdom work.

Some members of Coordinating Council and I are trying to visit all of our congregations in the coming year or so. It is useful for us to see you all in your natural habitat! I hope to join you some Sunday morning in the not so distant future.

The Coordinating Council and I continue to work on nuts and bolts of conference administration throughout the year as we meet every other month. A big thank you to our behind the scenes workers – John Buckwalter (bookkeeper), Dale Beebee (budget committee), Tadelech Matewos (prayer coordinator), Duane Davis (newsletter editor) and Kirk House (congregational news editor) for all their contributions!

As we enter a new fiscal year, I ask that you encourage your congregations to continue to support the work of the conference financially. I also encourage you to take back information about resources and connections available through NYMC. Working and praying together as a conference, we make a bigger impact when we invest in God's kingdom together!

Sonya Stauffer Kurtz, Moderator

Conference Minister's Report

For Delegate Assembly on September 15, 2012



God is at work in New York Mennonite Conference guiding us in this transition time toward effective ministry in a post Christendom era. "Dreams and Visions 2010-2017" guides us in our twin priorities of new and renewed churches reaching across the state of New York.

In late April I attended Exponential 2012, a gathering of over 5000 leaders with a focus on church planting. It was an amazing event with many workshops on effective ways to be the church. Much of the theology was Anabaptist. It's not sufficient for us to "do" church like we always have. Deep changes are called for, this training event helped me to wrestle with some of our underlying issues and opportunities.

On June 3rd at the RiverRock Church on the West Side of Buffalo, there was a reconciliation service with healing of relationships from events since the 90's involving the West Side Church of the Living Word and New York Mennonite Conference. The service was led by Bob Tice, pastor at RiverRock, and myself. The congregation of 200 included present and former New York Mennonite Conference leaders, present and former attendees of congregations that have met in that location, and other church leaders from the Buffalo area.

I continue to relate to the Emmanuel Chin congregation in Buffalo. It is always a blessing to me to be together.

We also continue to take steps toward a multi-ethnic Anabaptist church on the West Side of Buffalo that ministers in holistic ways. I'm in conversation with potential leaders for this work. On August 20, the former Harris Hill Mennonite church property was sold to North Gate church led by Jon Hasselbeck. Funds from this will be designated toward outreach and church planting.

Linda Wright was ordained on May 20 at the Jesus Church in Addison, NY. On October 28 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Diane Stitt Melchert will be licensed for ministry in Oxford, England.

I continue to be engaged with 8 Mennonite conferences in the northeast (ANEC) who cooperate in offering training and resources for church planting. A fall training event is planned for September 21-22.

Two significant books I've been reading lately are "The Tangible Kingdom, Creating Incarnational Community", Halter and Smay; and "The Forgotten Ways, Reactivating the Missional Church", Hirsch.

The District Ministers (formerly overseers) meet regularly and confer on many other occasions as we support congregations in becoming healthy centers of mission. I'm grateful for Terry Zehr's assistance as Associate Conference Minister.

Grace and peace,
Gene Miller-Conference Minister

New York Mennonite Conference

Budget Planning Report Fiscal Year Ending 9/2013

	Budget		Actual	Actual	Proposed
	FYE 9-2011	FYE 9-2012	FYE 9-2012 10/1-8/15	percent of 10.5 month	FYE 9-2013
Income					
Congregational giving	\$75,000	\$70,000	\$ 56,478	92%	\$ 66,000
MMA dividend (& checking acct interest)	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$ 2,543	145%	\$ 2,500
Total income	\$78,000	\$72,000	\$ 59,021	94%	\$ 68,500
Expenses					
Congregational resourcing					
Delegate assembly	\$100	\$100	\$ 100	114%	\$100
Conference miscellaneous	\$150	\$150	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0
Subtotal	\$250	\$250	\$100	46%	\$100
Coordinating council					
Travel and expenses	\$275	\$275	\$ 192	80%	\$100
Liability insurance	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$ 1,345	102%	\$1,400
Wider church coordination	\$3,000	\$1,750	\$ 874	57%	\$3,000
Office expenses	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$ 844	96%	\$1,000
Subtotal	\$5,775	\$4,525	\$3,255	82%	\$5,500
Leadership commission					
Conference Ministers Workshop	\$600	\$600	\$ 549	105%	\$600
Ministers Retreat	\$1,580	\$1,580	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0
Subtotal	\$2,180	\$2,180	\$549	29%	\$600
Outreach and mission					
MC-USA First Fruits	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$ 1,800	86%	\$2,400
Travel & expenses	\$100	\$100	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0
Subtotal	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$1,800	82%	\$2,400
Staff support					
Conference minister	\$34,000	\$35,045	\$ 33,586	110%	\$ 35,463
Overseers	\$30,000	\$25,500	\$ 21,372	96%	\$ 25,500
Travel and expenses	\$8,000	\$7,000	\$ 7,863	128%	\$ 9,000
Subtotal	\$72,000	\$67,545	\$62,821	106%	\$69,963
Total expenses	\$82,705	\$77,000	\$68,525	102%	\$78,563
Balance (income - expenses)	-\$4,705	-\$5,000	-\$9,504		-\$10,063



New York Mennonite Conference

An Area Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Leadership Commission Report for Fall Delegate Meeting:

For over a year, this commission has been working with Diane Stitt Melchert (originally from Lowville) regarding our Conference holding credentials for her ministry in England. This is unprecedented for us, and with the help of Nancy Kauffman (Mennonite Church USA Denominational Minister), and the support and counsel of Stuart Murray Williams of the Anabaptist Network (<http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com>), we,ve come up with a very positive plan of action. Diane,s ministry includes working with Baptist and Anglican groups. She leads a small house church and a regional Anabaptist Bible Study group. She connects with the Anabaptist Network and has preached in the only Mennonite Church in England. Her ministry is multi-faceted and represents one way that leadership finds its way in a post-Christian culture. Our purpose in licensing her toward ordination is to support and empower Diane,s ongoing ministry as a missionary/evangelist with the goal of planting an Anabaptist congregation. First Mennonite Church of New Bremen will be her „sending,, congregation and is putting together a support team which will meet with her several times each year. Diane will be reporting to us periodically as well as writing articles and attending Conference gatherings as she is able. Our current plan is to license her in October. If you have further questions, please contact Terry Zehr.

Ministers Retreat was a good event again this year. We did not have a keynote speaker, but „checked in,, with each other, continued to develop our relationships, and set aside very specific retreat time into our schedule. In one of our sessions, we tackled the feedback we received from the Leadership Seminar last February. The table group comments were compiled allowing us to look at the breadth of comments to glean the wisdom of the group. Leadership continues to be a complex issue in congregations, and we seek to embody the kinds of leadership that empower the church into God,s call.

A report of the use of Leadership Scholarship Funds:

If it,s not already up, the scholarship application will be mounted on our website (<http://www.nymennonite.org>). This fund is specifically for use in leadership development. We seek for the fund to be active and fruitful. This fiscal year, it,s use included the following:

Dale Meyers - Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (<http://www.lmpeacecenter.org>) „Clergy Clinic,,

Janette Gallagher - Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (<http://www.ambs.edu>) course „Turn Around Strategies for Churches,,

Terry Zehr - Atlantic Coast Conference sponsored course „Intentional Interim Ministry Training,,

Our hope is that each of these persons will bring their learnings into our Conference in fruitful ways. Please ask them about these courses. They might even be able to help your congregation!

Funds released: \$1138.78

Funds Available: \$29733

We continue to clarify our use for this fund and desire to have it open to anyone who seeks to develop leadership capacities for use in our congregations, and responsive to level of need as well, so we can empower those who may not have access otherwise.

Respectfully Submitted:

Terry Zehr (Chair), Sandy Craft (Lay Member), Tim Wright (Pastor), Gene Miller (CM)

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

Currently, more than 1,100 MCC workers serve in more than 50 countries, including the United States and Canada. MCC, a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation.

MCC continues to respond to urgent needs around the globe and at home.

MCC has committed \$5.5 million to support people affected by the drought and food crisis in East Africa. MCC is supporting people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya through emergency food assistance, services to displaced families and host communities as well as long term food security projects. The population in the Dollo Ado refugee camps in southeast Ethiopia continues to grow as unprecedented numbers of Somalis flee their own country.

Domestically, the Mobile Meat Canner operates in 33 different locations across the United States and Canada, from October thru May. Over 10,000 volunteers each year fill, weigh, stack, wash, and label every can. Over the 2010-2011 season, the collective efforts of all involved produced over 500,000 cans (over a million pounds of meat).

MCC sees sustainable community development as a key area of its work.

Because education directly affects an individual's ability to provide for the future, MCC supports creative, community-based education through the Global Family education sponsorship program. Each year MCC also provides more than 100,000 school kits, which include pencils, notebooks and other items, to students around the world. Likewise, a number of MCC workers serve in education-related assignments – from leading English classes in China or Egypt to teaching in high schools in Zambia.

MCC and partners continue to work for peaceful resolution of violent conflict.

In Brazil, domestic violence is the leading cause of death and disability for women ages 16 to 44. Counseling, shelters, training and employment are often not available for women in danger. In March 2011, MCC workers in Curitiba, Brazil began work with a local partner to construct a peace program that specifically addresses issues of domestic violence.

MCC and New York Conference of the Mennonite Church USA

The New York Conference, its congregations and individuals generously contributed over \$56,600 to MCC in fiscal year 2011-2012. Sewing circles, youth groups and school classes donated countless health kits, comforters, and school kits for distribution around the world. Others gave of their time at the Agape Shoppe in Watertown. Dan and Jeanne Jantzi, currently serving with MCC in Indonesia, are members of the New York Mennonite Conference. MCC gratefully acknowledges this generous support from the New York Mennonite Conference.

Mennonite Central Committee continues to be the hands and feet of Christ in a world where injustice and suffering abound, as well as perseverance, courage and compassion. Please continue to pray for the work of Mennonite Central Committee. Blessings to you as you join the ministry of MCC: "Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ."

Submitted by Bruce Campbell-Janz, MCC East Coast Executive Director.

*Mennonite Central Committee, a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches,
shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ
by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.*

New York Mennonite Women's Report

Celebration 2012

As I mentioned in my last delegate's report, New York Mennonite Women has had an exciting year! We were profoundly affected by the Sister Care Seminar that Mennonite Women USA presented in March 2012. Some of the women who attended have taken the basics of the seminar back to their congregations to encourage and teach women to care for themselves and each other.

We are anticipating another time of gathering together at Celebration 2012 to continue in this area. The Board met in August 2012 to discuss possible ideas for our time together.

Depending on interest and the availability of women to help plan, we may offer a time of retreat/renewal in the spring of 2013.

We long to keep the connections between women and friends of New York Mennonite Conference alive and relevant. One of our goals is still to bring new life and new ideas to us as a board. We would like to encourage and invite others to join us.

If we are to continue to help women connect and support each other, as daughters in Christ, we need you! Come join us on the board of New York Mennonite Women and learn alongside us about all the ways we can support and connect with each other!!

Respectfully submitted,

Janette Gallagher

For New York Mennonite Women Board

Resource Advocate Report September 2012

A new option for adult groups is [*Real Life, Real Families: Listen & Talk Series 1*](#). This is a faith-based curriculum to help participants learn from the real-life experiences of others, and encourage them in addressing family needs or problems in healthy ways, based on the [*Shaping Families*](#) radio program.

Recommended for small groups, Sunday school, or parenting classes, each of the twelve ready-to-use *Real Life* sessions focuses on a different issue facing families. Audio interviews feature people who have either faced the issue themselves or are experts on the issue, and commentary, and the study guide includes Bible texts, prayers, and discussion and activities to draw participants into the topic. Session topics include Parenting after Divorce, Teenage Substance Abuse, Media, more.

Available as a booklet with CDs, or as a download including PDF study guide and MP3 audio files.

Also new for adults are additional titles in the series ***With the Word: A Bible Study and Devotional Guide for Groups or Individuals***. This offers adult groups or individuals brief Bible study sessions with devotionals on the same text and theme. New to the series is a study on *Isaiah* joining Matthew, Luke, and Psalms. Two more studies are planned to be out next spring.

Coming in October: [*Breathe It In: God Gives Life*](#), MennoMedia's 2013 Vacation Bible school curriculum, will invite children in early childhood through Grade 5 to discover the life-giving breath of God! (Please note the change in age range, as past VBS materials have been recommended through grade 8.)

MennoMedia is pleased that VBS 2013 will be out earlier this year. This is in response to congregations who have been unable to consider MennoMedia materials in the past because they needed to make a decision before the materials were available. Watch the VBS webpage for more details coming soon.

Here are some of MennoMedia's newest and upcoming books:

(Do you know about the savings available on books through the MennoMedia Study Shelf? Groups and classes may order five or more copies of any Herald Press title and save 25%.)

- [*Making Friends among the Taliban: A Peacemaker's Journey in Afghanistan*](#) by Jonathan Larson, tells the inspiring story of American aid worker Dan Terry. Terry, who lived and worked in Afghanistan until his violent death in 2010, offers a model for living authentically wherever we are. A new documentary, [*Weaving Life*](#), about Terry's life, is also available. The documentary was produced by students at Eastern Mennonite University.

- ***[The Power of All: Building a Multivoiced Church](#)***, by Stuart Murray and Sian Murray-Williams, offers a biblical basis and resources to encourage a multivoiced approach to worship, learning, discernment, and pastoral care.
- ***[Laughter is Sacred Space: The Not-So-Typical Journey of a Mennonite Actor](#)***, by Ted Swartz, details Swartz's life growing up in the Mennonite church, working in the family butcher shop, attending seminary and becoming involved in acting, as well as the tragic suicide of his creative partner and confidant Lee Eshleman.
- ***[Please Pass the Faith: The Art of Spiritual Grandparenting](#)***, by Elsie Rempel, encourages all older adults to consider their role in shaping the children and youth of the church. Read the introduction and see the table of contents.
- ***[Relentless Goodbye: Grief and Love in the Shadow of Dementia](#)***, a true story by Ginnie Horst Burkholder, offers inspiration and insight on the topic of dementia as well as illness and health, faith and doubt, grieving and acceptance.

These are just a few of the rich resources we have available to us. I will have these titles and others at my Browse and Buy table the weekend of Celebration!

Kathy Shelly
Resource Advocate for New York Mennonite Conference
Contact me at: Resources@nymennonite.org

Notes & news:

MennoMedia has a great variety of videos and DVDs for adults and youth, on peace and justice, social issues, Bible studies, and more. Also available for youth midweek programs are downloadable **Generation Why Bible studies**, and **Fast Lane Bible studies** for junior youth.

Fall 2012 is the first quarter that *Adult Bible Study* has been available for purchase in Spanish. The Spanish version of *Adult Bible Study* is available as a download. Find it [here](#), and know that you can also browse and purchase other Spanish resources from MennoMedia.

MennoMedia has reorganized the *Faith Markers* ministry resources to be free, downloadable materials to support faith formation. These include ideas and materials to acknowledge significant faith events in the lives of children and youth. Look for an overview chart with suggestions about marking faith milestones; worship resources for faith marker celebrations such as Parent-child dedication, Entering Sunday school, Entering first grade, Bible presentation, Entering teen years, Entering adulthood, and Baptism; sample faith marker gifts, a list of books and resources by age category, and more. Check these out and let others in your conference know about them!

- **Gather ,Round Bible curriculum** offers [free customizable ads](#), which can be used to invite others to attend Sunday school. Tell churches to add their contact information and place in local papers, newsletters, or on your church website.
- MennoMedia's quarterly newsletter ***Links@MennoMedia*** offers a behind-the-scenes look at MennoMedia projects. Anyone may sign up for this or other e-mail subscriptions, including "A Sip of Scripture," "Peace Story," "Media Matters," and "Another Way"—all of which feature interesting content with a faith perspective.



Mennonite Church USA is made up of more than 100,000 members in about 900 congregations, 21 area conferences, various constituent groups and churchwide agencies.

Together, we are inspired by **Vision: Healing and 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.*

To carry out this vision, we pursue the following purpose: *Joining in God's activity in the world, we develop and nurture missional Mennonite congregations of many cultures.* We believe that congregations are the primary expression of God's work in the world. Together with area conferences and churchwide agencies, the national conference nurtures the life and ministry of congregations by providing:

- a place of **identity and belonging** in interdependence with other congregations.
- **education, resources and encouragement** for pastors and congregational leaders.
- means for calling, training and sustaining **leaders**.
- avenues for **mutual discernment and witness** beyond ourselves.

As part of the Anabaptist world, Mennonite Church USA enjoys unprecedented favor in the eyes of our world community. Many other Christians are looking to us for examples of ways to live in a post-Christendom society. Our emphasis on discipleship and Spirit-led Christian living helps people envision the practical implications of the gospel. Our commitment to relief and development attracts many people outside our church to support our missional causes. And our focus on peace and justice attracts many to consider peaceful alternatives to violence.

Over the past few years, Mennonite Church USA leaders have been cultivating a forward-looking, missional approach to church life. We have developed a missional vision and purposeful plan to draw all parts of the church to work toward common goals. You can find the statement online at www.mennoniteusa.org.

Mennonite Church USA has adopted seven priorities to guide our ministry across all parts of the church. The first three priorities express the core of congregational life from an Anabaptist perspective. The other four priorities identify areas for particular emphasis over the next 10 years, particularly through area conferences, churchwide agencies and the national conference.

1. **Christian formation.** This priority reflects the centrality of Jesus Christ in the church. Missional Mennonite congregations call people to Christian commitment, disciple them in the way of Christ, teach them to embrace the scriptures, help them develop Christian identity from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective, and cultivate their vocational calling.
2. **Christian community.** This priority reflects the communal, organic nature of the body of Christ. Missional congregations worship together, extend hospitality, practice scriptural discernment, cultivate Christ-centered unity, and learn to agree and disagree in love.
3. **Holistic Christian witness.** This priority reflects the winsome nature of the church's witness. Missional churches share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, birthing new communities of faith. They reflect God's coming reign by striving for peace and justice.
4. **Stewardship.** This priority reflects our commitment to surrender all that we have for the sake of God's reign. Missional churches cultivate whole-life stewardship, care for creation, and practice mutual aid.
5. **Leadership development.** This priority reflects our commitment to develop leaders at all levels of the church. Missional churches help all of their members reach their potential as they follow God's call.
6. **Undoing racism and advancing intercultural transformation.** This priority reflects our intent to dismantle individual and systemic racism in our church, develop intercultural competence, heal racial divisions, and value all the gifts of God's diverse people.
7. **Church-to-church relationships.** This priority reflects our desire to give and receive gifts in the broader body of Christ, working toward Christian unity as a witness to the world. We cultivate a particularly close relationship with Mennonite Church Canada since we share a common history, confession of faith, and ministerial polity, and many joint ministry ventures.

We encourage every area conference to think of ways to advance at least several of these priorities over the next few years. As you move that direction, we will find ways to share your insights and experience with the rest of the church. In this way, we can grow together in God's call.

Ervin R. Stutzman, executive director, Mennonite Church USA